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ABSTRACT

Experiences of 12 American families who hosted American Field Service (AFS) international exchange students (ages 16-18) are documented. The purpose of the study was to understand more fully the dynamics of the normal, reasonably satisfactory hosting experience. Each case study presents background information on the family, a narration of significant events during the student's sojourn, and a chart depicting the emotional swings experienced by the family. Seven families experienced the somewhat normal adjustment cycle that began with satisfaction with the student's integration into the household followed by disillusionment or moodiness on the part of the student, and ending on an upswing after problems had been worked out. Dynamics working in these cases were lack of enthusiasm of host siblings, hypercritical stance taken by the exchange student, absence of a host sibling in the home, difficult personality of the student, unwillingness of the student to participate in family life, and a clash of student goals and family expectations. Four host families experienced no negative adjustment periods. Dynamics of these positive experiences include delightful personality of exchange student, suitability of the student for the experience, a large host family comprised of members with differing interests, and accepting nature of both student and family. One hosting experience was terminated early, the reason being lack of communication between the family and the student. (KC)

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Preliminary Report, 1980-81 Phase

THE STUDY OF THE DYNAMICS OF HOSTING

July 1981

by Neal Grove
Director of Research
AFS International

This preliminary report is being prepared primarily for distribution at the Third Annual Intercultural Conference and Workshop (Bradford, England, July 13-17, 1981), and to those members of the worldwide AFS community who have taken particular interest in the work of the Research (formerly, Program Development) Department of AFS International. Ordinarily, a report of findings would not be issued at this early stage, immediately following the end of data collecting and prior to the necessary painstaking analysis of that data. However, a few conclusions from the 1980-81 phase of this project are already obvious (if only in rough, outline form), and will be of interest to the limited audience intended for this preliminary report.

Purpose of this Research

The purpose of The Study of the Dynamics of Hosting, stated without elaboration, is to document and interpret the experiences of families who host AFS exchange students (age 16-18) in their homes for a year. We believe that, with the single exception of the outstanding project carried out by Raymond Gordon about a decade ago in Bogota, Colombia,[1] no effort has ever been made to study the intercultural experience from the point of view of families who act as hosts for intercultural sojourners. For AFS International, the present study represents an attempt to more fully understand the dynamics of the normal, reasonably satisfactory hosting experience. Very little is known about *normal* hosting experiences because they are relatively problem-free and therefore do not come to the attention of AFS staff and volunteers during the year.

Nature of this Research

During the 1980-81 hosting year, five American host families agreed to participate in The Study of the Dynamics of Hosting. Each family was interviewed in their homes on seven occasions by the author of this report: two interviews were held prior to the arrival of the AFS student, four were held during the sojourn of the student in the home, and one was held immediately after the student's departure.[2] Two of the families were located within commuting distance of Philadelphia; three were within commuting distance of New York. Each interview lasted from 1½ to 2½ hours, and was taped in its entirety. Written summaries of each interview were prepared by the author's associate, Bettina Hansel; it is largely on the basis of these summaries that this preliminary report has been prepared. Each family also assisted the author

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[1] Raymond Gordon, *Living in Latin America: A Case Study in Cross-Cultural Communication*. Skokie, IL: National Textbook Co., 1974. The individuals being hosted in Bogota were Peace Corps trainees and other American students aged in their low 20s.

[2] The research design calls for an eighth interview with each of the five families, to be held six to nine months following the departure of the AFS student.

in arriving at certain conclusions about the nature of its experience during the seventh interview. In particular, each family helped the author draw the diagram of its adjustment cycle; the five diagrams are the focus of this report.

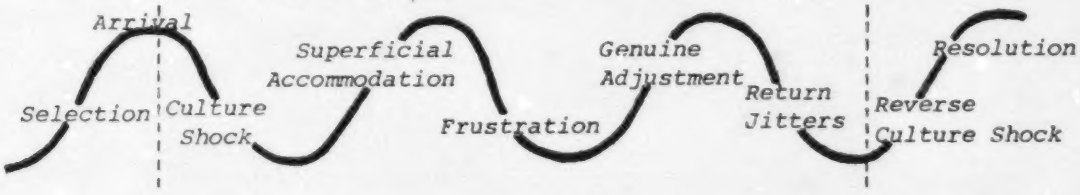
Background to this Report

Ever since Sverre Lysgaard proposed the "U-curve hypothesis" in 1953, practitioners as well as theorists in the field of intercultural educational exchange have been fascinated by the emotional ups and downs of students and others sojourning in a foreign nation. The U-curve hypothesis, one of the best known concepts in cross-cultural studies, was originally stated by Lysgaard as follows:

> *Adjustment as a process over time seems to follow a U-shaped curve: adjustment is felt to be easy and successful to begin with; then follows a "crisis" in which one feels less well adjusted, somewhat lonely and unhappy; finally one begins to feel better adjusted again, becoming more integrated into the foreign community. Or, to put it differently, we suggested that adjustment as a process over time operates at increasingly more intimate levels of contact with the community visited. The need for more intimate contact, however, makes itself felt before one is able to achieve such contact and for some time, therefore, one may feel "lonely" and maladjusted.*[3]

A number of other writers have commented on the U-curve hypothesis over the years, but, in its essential form, the U-curve has never been basically altered. However, in several of its orientation handbooks AFS International has proposed an adjustment cycle that resembles a smoothly oscillating sine wave, and that is intended in a general way to graph the periodic changes over time in the emotional state of AFS students. The wave appears as follows and is accompanied, in part, by this explanatory statement:

> *Stresses and strains are inherent to most living situations, and the cross-cultural living experience certainly is no exception. Past experience has shown that individuals go through several emotional stages in the course of living in a new or different culture. These stages are called the* adjustment cycle *are are subject to variations from person to person. The different stages therefore cannot be specifically plotted for any individual, but a general outline can be established that may help you to understand your own reactions to your new environment. A chart depicting the general adjustment cycle experienced by many AFSers might look like the following:*[4]



[3] Sverre Lysgaard, "Adjustment in a Foreign Society; Norwegian Fulbright Grantees Visiting the United States," *International Social Science Bulletin*, Vol. 7, 1955.

[4] AFS International, *Host Family Orientation Handbook*. New York: AFS International, 1978. The quote and chart are taken from an activity entitled "Cross-Cultural Adjustment of AFS Students." This material was written by a team headed by the present author; it therefore reflects his preconceptions prior to the time he began carrying out The Study of the Dynamics of Hosting.

It will be noted that the portion of this chart that covers the period to time during which the student is the foreign country (between the vertical broken lines) includes two-and-a-half complete cycles of the sine wave.

Although no research has ever addressed the question of the adjustment cycle for host families, common sense suggests that a host family's emotional swings probably are affected to a considerable extent by those of the exchange student living in the family's home; the present research so far has strongly confirmed this common-sense notion.

Let us now consider the patterns of adjustment over time that were exhibited by the five student-host groups who participated in the 1980-81 phase of The Study of the Dynamics of Hosting.

Family A

Family A lives not far from Philadelphia in an upper middle class suburb in which most homes are large and are set on lots of several acres.[5] The father, 48, is an orthodontist with a successful practice, making this family the most affluent of the five studied. The mother, 47, is a former elementary school teacher who divides her time between the home and a variety of other activities such as substitute teaching and volunteer librarian work. There are two children. The daughter, 16, attends a demanding private school where she is active in several sports as well as other extracurricular activities--including the AFS Club, of which she is president. The son, 14, attends a public school and is active in several sports. This family attends church regularly, participates frequently in social gatherings of friends and relatives, and enjoys two-week vacations three or four times each year. Family A had had several hosting experiences previously (most of which lasted no more than two or three months), many of which were arranged through the local Rotary Club, of which the father is a prominent member. For this reason, Family A had realistic expectations of a hosting experience under AFS's auspices. The family did not seek to host an AFS student, but was approached by the local AFS Chapter. The mother was the most favorable to the idea of hosting, seeing it as an opportunity for the children and as a potentially enjoyable experience. The father declined to take a stand on the issue, saying that he would have to deal with the AFS student less often than the others, so that they should be the ones to decide. The brother was noncommittal. The sister (whose school the AFSer would attend) said she was in favor of hosting so long as her responsibility for the student would not extend beyond introducing her to the school and to her classmates; she did not wish to have the AFSer tagging along after her throughout the year. The family decided to host largely on the strength of the mother's enthusiasm for the idea.

The student placed with Family A was a female from Norway, age 17, who shared the active interest in sports demonstrated by the host siblings. The student spoke English quite well. She had travelled outside of Scandinavia only once, to the Isle of Rhodes in 1979; however, she had a brother living in California. The student was described as "independent and mature" as well as highly intelligent; the latter quality was necessary due to the nature of the school she would attend in the host community. She was also described as someone who "spreads happiness." From a technical standpoint, this placement seemed to promise satisfaction for all parties.

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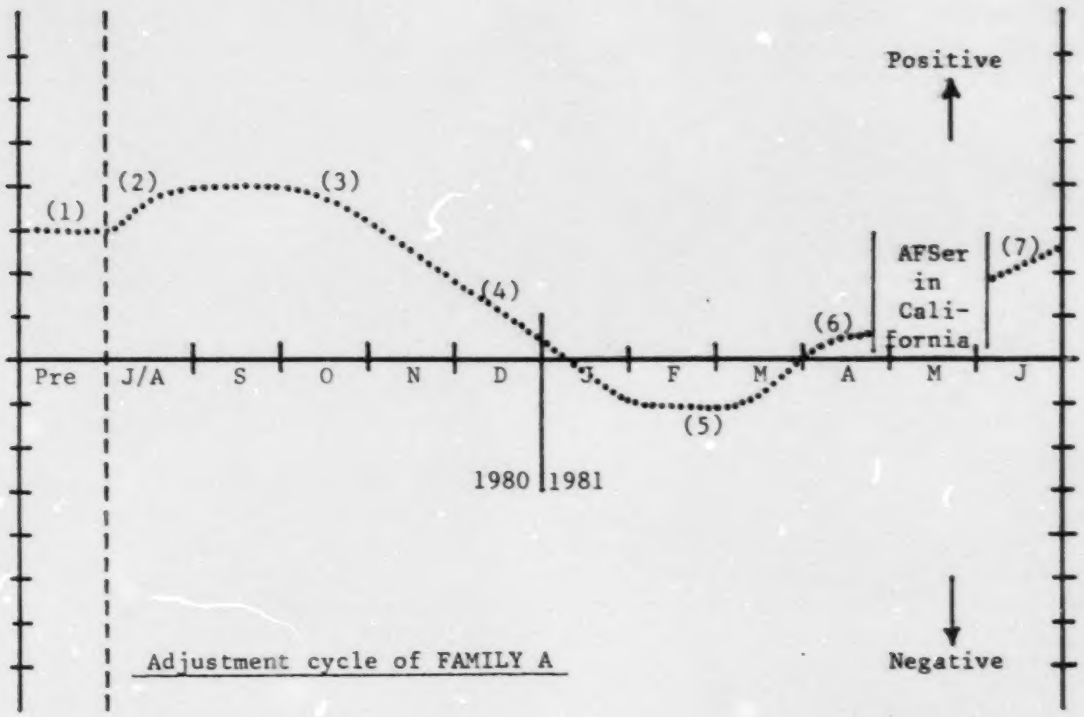
[5] The names of the five families will not be mentioned in this report. Prior to publication of the final report, each family will be given the option of having its identity disguised. Revealing it now would deny them this option.



Adjustment cycle of FAMILY A

The pattern of adjustment followed by Family A during the course of the year is illustrated by the chart above. The numbers in parentheses along the dotted line are explained by the comments below.

(1) Family A approached the hosting experience with realistic expectations. They had hosted young people previously for up to three months, and therefore could imagine in some detail what a year's hosting experience would be like.

(2) The initial impression made by the Norwegian student was very favorable. She showed herself to be independent from the beginning. The initial adjustment and settling-in process was not at all difficult. The student and the (younger) host brother established a friendly relationship rather quickly. The host sister seemed to remain rather neutral towards the student, but did indeed introduce her to her classmates at school and otherwise made efforts to help her feel at home.

(3) The quality of the relationship began to slip following a sharp disagreement that arose between the student and the host mother's parents during a period when the host parents were on vacation. The relationship with the host sister was by this time conspicuously lacking in warmth.

(4) Prior to Christmas, the student openly opposed the suggestion that she accompany the family on a journey to visit several relatives. The relationship with the host brother was sharply deteriorating by this time, and that with the host sister continued to be cool, if correct. The host parents were beginning to voice concern about the quality of the experience from the student's point of view.

(5) The experience reached its nadir during February and into early March. Disagreements between the student and the host siblings (especially the host brother) were occasionally open and sharp.

(6) The quality of the relationship between the student and the host siblings showed signs of improving slowly during the latter part of March and early April. By this time the student was making plans to spend six weeks in California as part of a school study project. (The student spent closer to seven weeks in California, missing several important end-of-school events in the host community, and returning barely in time for graduation.)

(7) Upon returning from California in June, the student was in high spirits and almost instantly established a relationship with the host sister that was far better than it had ever been earlier in the year. However, the host brother did not seem to share in this "era of good feelings." The host parents felt much relieved that, in the end, the student and the host sister demonstrated warmth towards each other.

A major dynamic that seems to have operated in the case of Family A was the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the two host siblings for having an AFS student in their home.[6]

Family B

Family B lives not far from New York in an upper middle class suburb, and in a portion of that suburb where the homes are especially attractive. The father, 42, is the treasurer of a large multinational corporation; he has an interest in sports (as player and as spectator) that is not shared by the other members of the family. The mother, 37, is a full-time homemaker and a part-time Lamaze (childbirth method) instructor; she also cares for infant foster children in the home for up to several months per child. There are three daughters. The oldest, 17, plays the violin and guitar, and is active in a variety of musical groups; in addition, she is interested in sailing and is a leading member of her church's youth group. The middle daughter, 13, is a popular eighth grader with an interest in horseback riding and music. The youngest daughter is 5 years old. This family is very active in the affairs of the local Presbyterian church, with the father serving as an elder, the oldest daughter as a deacon, and the parents assisting in the efforts of the church to assist Vietnamese refugees. Family B had had no previous hosting experience (other than that provided by the infant foster children); their expectations of the hosting experience could be described as high and imprecise. The family did not seek to become a host family; they were approached by the local AFS Chapter. They accepted this turn of events in a somewhat fatalistic way: "It was meant to be." They were able also to develop a rationale for hosting with no difficulty. The mother was the member of the family most enthusiastic about the idea of hosting, closely followed by the daughters; the father attempted to take a more objective view of the possibility while never opposing it.

The student placed with Family B was a female from Austria who turned 18 very soon after arriving in the home. She had graduated from her secondary school in Austria, and she spoke English quite well. She had previously travelled to a number of European countries. The student was active in sports, and was described as charming, self-assured, well-balanced, open-minded, natural, and so forth. A Roman Catholic, the student stated on her papers that she "occasionally" practiced her religion. From a technical standpoint, this placement seemed to pair a strong student with a strong family, giving every hope of a satisfactory year together.

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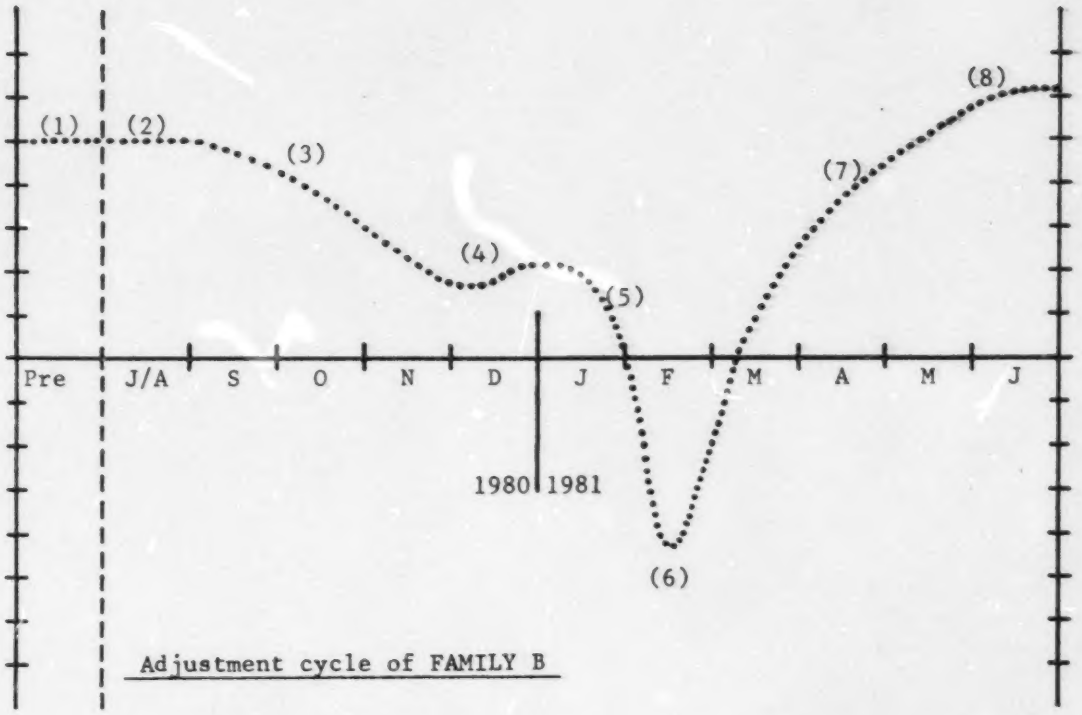
[6] For each host family, only one "major dynamic" will be noted. Clearly, numerous factors combine to make an experience involving several individuals and lasting ten or eleven months; these will be explored in the final report on this research.



Adjustment cycle of FAMILY B

The pattern of adjustment shown by Family B is illustrated on the chart above. The numbers in parentheses are references to the comments below.

(1) Family B approached the hosting experience with high, imprecise, expectations. It would not be accurate, however, to describe the family's expectations as unrealistically high. The family had not hosted previously.

(2) The student made a good impression upon arriving. The initial adjustment and settling-in process was not difficult, although some minor matters had to be worked out between the student and the oldest host sister concerning the sharing of a bedroom and use of the bathroom in the mornings. The student rapidly developed a strong, warm relationship with the *middle* daughter.

(3) The quality of the hosting experience began to decline very early in the school year due to the student's disillusionment with the AFS experience for a variety of reasons. In particular, she was disappointed with the high school and with her American peers, and, more importantly, *she felt unnecessarily restricted at a time in her life (age 18, post-graduation) when she especially valued independence*. She was *not* unhappy with her host family. At about this time, the oldest daughter began to feel distressed by several qualities of the AFS student, including her disregard of religious practice, her disparagement of American peers, her disinterest in school, and her more liberal attitudes and freer emotional expression. However, the host daughter attempted to put the best possible face on the relationship, so that there was never open conflict between her and the AFSer.

(4) Prior to Christmas, the AFS student's younger brother came over from Austria and was a guest in the home for about three weeks. This temporarily reversed the growing depression of the student, and the family was able to enjoy the holidays.

Another factor enabling the student to feel happier at this time was a deep romantic involvement with a 24-year-old man in the community; the student found him to possess a degree of maturity and depth seemingly lacking in virtually all of her high school peers. It was already clear, however, that this romance was under the shadow of the student's commitment to return to Austria in June.

(5) Beginning about mid-January, the student entered a period of deep disillusionment and depression, making life extremely difficult for the host family. Three events, all within the space of about two weeks, precipitated her despair: (a) her brother returned to Austria, (b) she ended her romance, and (c) a foster infant, present in the home since the student's arrival, departed for permanent adoptive parents. The student began to seriously consider returning to Austria prior to the end of the AFS year, and eventually announced her decision to do so. The middle daughter at this time became disillusioned with the AFS student, who had previously been a sort of heroine to her, and became cautious, if not distant, in her dealings with the student.

(6) In mid-February, the student attended a mid-year weekend in Princeton, NJ, that was sponsored by AFS. (She had been dissuaded temporarily by the family from returning home immediately.) Here she was able to talk at length with many other AFS students, and thus to gain perspective on the quality of her own experience. She emerged from her depression very rapidly after this weekend, dropped her decision to return to Austria, and began making plans for the rest of the year. The quality of the experience for the host family improved markedly.

(7) About mid-April, the student and the oldest host daughter became highly involved together in planning for their attendance at the high school senior prom, which occurred early in May. This period represented the high point in their relationship.

(8) From early May through the day of the student's departure, she became involved in a highly positive way with a number of her peers from the local high school. Her life became a constant gala round of parties, outings, sports activities, and other gatherings, and she came to dread the thought of leaving the community. This was the high point of the year for her, and, consequently, for the host family.

A major dynamic that seems to have operated in the case of Family B was the introspective and hypercritical stance taken by the student concerning the nature of the AFS experience.

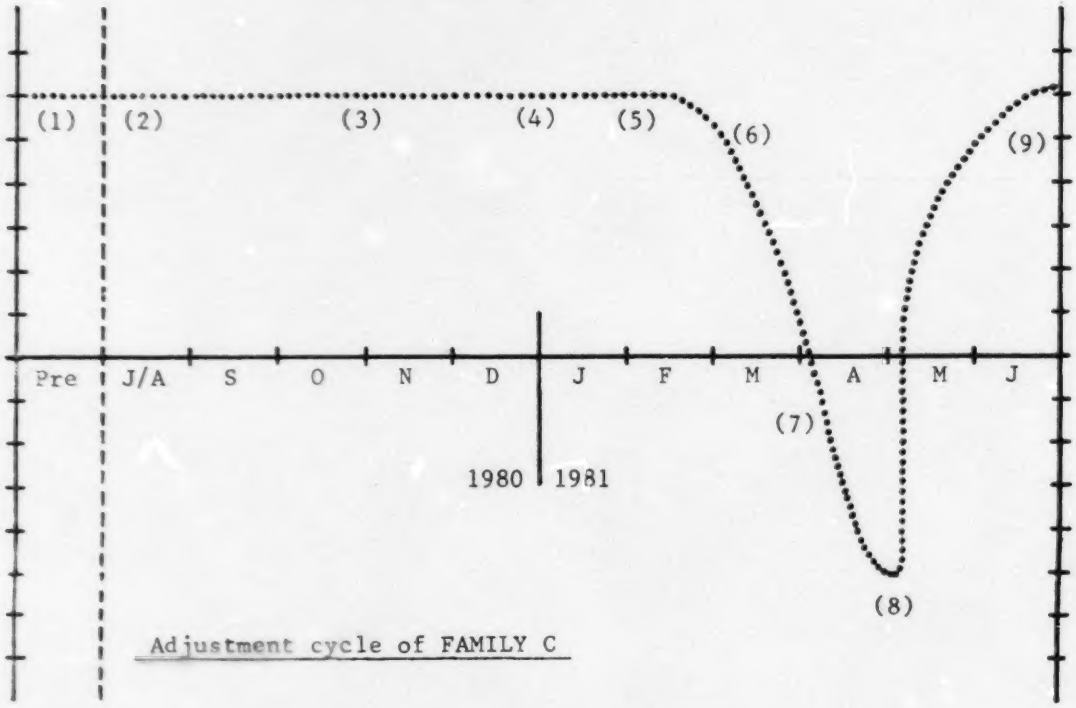
Family C

Family C lives not far from New York in an upper middle class suburb, in a two-story house set on a very large lot. The father, 43, is the operations manager of a small company located a few miles away. The mother, 38, is a part-time real estate salesperson. (She changed to another type of work--a regular 9-to-5 job--just prior to the end of the study.) This couple has no children of their own. The father has a teenage son by a previous marriage, but this child lives in another part of the state and is present in Family C's home only infrequently. This family--husband and wife--are very active in the life of their community: they are officers of a local political club and are members of two social clubs; the wife also is on the board of directors of the local chapter of the League of Women Voters, and helps to run a Brownie Troop. This family offered to host after seeing a poster placed by the local AFS Chapter. The primary motivation involved in Family C's decision to host was their desire to complete their family by adding a child to it. They wanted a student "who likes participating in family activities, who enjoys sharing her experiences with us and is interested in ours, and who

would be willing to accept our guidance during her year." This family had very high, imprecise expectations of the hosting experience because they had no previous experience as hosts and because their contact with teenagers was rather limited. They believed that they could be unusually successful as host parents because they saw the *absence* of host siblings as an advantage in that it would eliminate sibling rivalry and enable the student to form a closer relationship with them, the host parents. At the time this couple first volunteered to host, they suggested that they would be willing to take *two* AFS students into their home simultaneously; they reasoned that the experience might be better for each of the students if another young person were present in the home, not only adults. They did not see this notion as contradicting their belief that the absence of host siblings was an advantage because they saw a fundamental difference between the factors affecting a relationship between two AFSers on the one hand, and the factors affecting the relationship between an AFSer and a host sibling on the other. Their request for two AFS students was denied by the local AFS Chapter.

The student placed with Family C was a female from Colombia, age 17, who was described as "enjoying family activities, respectful, obedient, dynamic and active," and so forth. She spoke English moderately well, and had travelled to the USA previously as a tourist. She was accustomed to participation in social events due to the nature of her father's occupation. From a technical standpoint, this student seemed to be a good choice for Family C.

The pattern of adjustment followed by Family C during the course of the year is illustrated by the chart below. The numbers in parentheses are explained in the text beginning at the top of the following page.



Adjustment cycle of FAMILY C

(1) Family C approached the hosting experience with expectations that were both very high and very imprecise, since they neither had hosted previously nor had had extensive contact with teenagers.

(2) The initial impression made by the Colombian student was very favorable. She seemed to fit into the life of Family C quite well, and she soon formed an especially good relationship with the host mother. Initial adjustment and settling-in problems seemed completely absent.

(3) The high expectations of the host parents continued to be confirmed in every respect: "We're having the time of our lives!" They pointed out (to the author) that their theory about the benefits of having no host siblings seemed vindicated.

(4) The holiday season was a happy time. The host parents began to talk of their dread of the time (in June) when the AFSer would have to depart.

(5) In early February, Family C volunteered to host for one weekend a French AFS student who was in the New York office for counseling. This weekend was a huge success, and Family C immediately offered to host this second student for the remainder of the year. Even though the local Chapter was not in favor of this plan, the New York office completed all arrangements . . . only to have the French girl decide at the last minute not to come. (She felt it would be unfair to the Colombian girl.)

(6) In mid-February, the student attended a mid-year weekend in Princeton, NJ, that was sponsored by AFS. (This was the *same event* as that mentioned in the case of Family B, above.) Following this event, she began to show signs of unhappiness.

(7) A few weeks later, the student went on trips to Delaware and Florida, in both cases without the host parents. In Florida, she spent several days with some Colombian friends of her natural family, including several children her own age. She returned to Family C deeply dissatisfied with the local school and with her American peers; she became restless, bored, and argumentative. This condition rapidly worsened, making life miserable for the host parents. The latter said that they were finding it difficult to be, in effect, the only close friends of a teenager.[7]

(8) Very early in May, the host parents and the AFSer engaged in a heated disagreement over a relatively trivial issue. The next day, the student wept for a long time in her room--and when she re-emerged she seemed transformed. All her disagreeableness seemed to have vanished. On the next day, she and the host mother spent together one of the most enjoyable days of the year. From this point on, the relationship between the student and the host parents seemed qualitatively different; the student seemed better able to make friends in the community, and better able to accept the host parents *as parents*. She formed a closer, more intimate relationship with them then she had had anytime prior to February.

(9) The year ended with the host parents feeling very happy with the student and with the experience of hosting in general. They talked (as they had at earlier times during the year) of hosting again, and of hosting two students if possible.

The major dynamic that seems to have operated in the case of Family C was the absence of a host sibling (or of a second AFSer) in the home.

Family D

Family D lives not far from New York in an upper middle class suburb; their home is large and is located in an exclusive section of the town. The father, 45, has worked for a well-known international corporation all his life, and is now in a position of considerable responsibility. The mother, 45, is a full-time homemaker who also

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[7] The student had had little success in forming close friendships among American peers. This was a problem common to all five students studied during this phase.

serves as a volunteer ESL tutor and Girl Scout leader; she also teaches music two hours a week. There are five children, three older boys and two younger girls. The oldest son, 20, is a college sophomore. (He dropped out and returned home early during the period of the study.) The second son, 19, is also a college sophomore. The youngest son, 16, is a good student who participates in extracurricular activities such as drama, debate, and music; he is a member of two youth orchestras. The older daughter, 12, is also interested in music. The younger daughter, 9, is adopted. The mother and father attend different churches; the children attend the church of the mother. This family does not become heavily involved in community activities. Rather, much of its energy over the years seems to have gone into the hosting of a succession of people from all over the world. The family's longest previous hosting experience had been through AFS, when they had a student from Thailand who, by all accounts, was enormously charming and popular with everyone who knew him. Although the family had not offered to host in 1980, they readily agreed to do so when approached. This family clearly had the most realistic expectations of the hosting experience because they had been through similar experiences on many previous occasions.

The student placed with Family D was a male from Italy, age 16, who spoke English reasonably well and who had travelled considerably throughout Europe. He was described as having highly developed intellectual and cultural interests, and as being "a bit proud of his own knowledge" and "a bit too much self-confident." He was involved in team sports in Italy. He was also interested in music, debating, and academic pursuits, which was seen as a good match for the principal host sibling, the 16-year-old son. On first glance, then, this placement seemed technically good. However, it is worth noting that the host family papers described Family D as having "a house full of books and magazines," as "stressing academic excellence," and as being "intellectual." While this is not inaccurate, in retrospect it can be said that the term "intellectual" meant one thing when applied to the family and another thing when applied to the AFS student, with the student's intellectuality being of a somewhat higher, more thoroughly academic, nature than the family's. It should be noted also that this family showed no interest in sports, yet the local Chapter representatives who interviewed the family recommended "a European boy who is involved in sports." Their reasoning was that, since members of Family D were rarely home in the afternoons, the student needed to be able to find something to do and to make his own social contacts, both of which presumably could be accomplished through participation in team sports.

The pattern of adjustment followed by Family D during the course of the year is illustrated by the chart at the top of the following page. The numbers in parentheses on that chart are explained below.

(1) Family D approached the hosting experience with completely realistic expectations based on their many previous experiences as hosts. Their expectations were not unduly low, however, since an AFS student who had sojourned with them some years before was a thoroughly delightful young man.

(2) The Italian AFSer proved to be a difficult character from the start. His personality showed itself to be abrasive; he was insensitive and arrogant; he resisted attempts to persuade him to adjust to certain features of the life of Family D.[8] He readily confirmed the statements on his papers that he was "proud of his own know-

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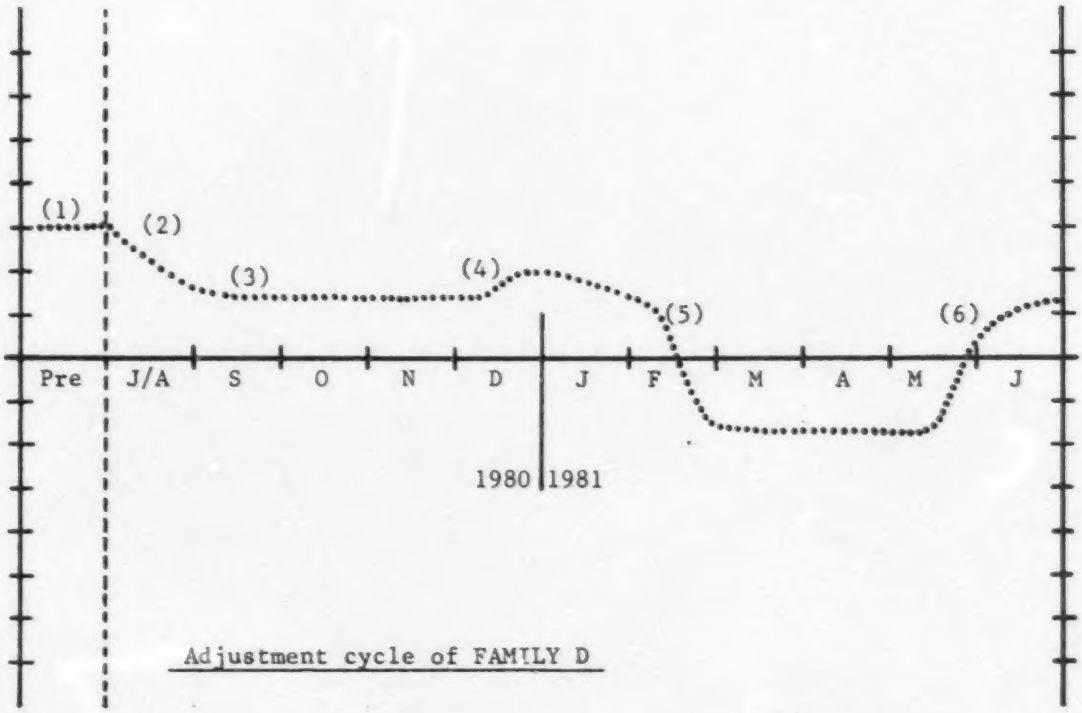
[8] An obvious interpretation is that the family was disappointed that the Italian student did not measure up to the lofty standards of their previous AFS student from Thailand. The author does not favor such an interpretation of Family D's initial disappointment with the Italian student.



Adjustment cycle of FAMILY D

ledge" and "a bit too much self-confident." He rapidly came into open conflict with the middle (19-year-old) host brother, and developed a somewhat antagonistic relationship with the older (12-year-old) host sister; the latter continued throughout the year.

(3) The middle son left for college in September, removing one source of friction from the home. The host parents were able, through considerable effort, to bring about certain changes in the student's habits that resulted in his adjusting to the family more successfully. The experience continued on at a reduced level of satisfaction for some months thereafter.

(4) The holiday season passed successfully; feelings seemed improved. The middle son, home from college, seemed to get along with the student satisfactorily, if not warmly.

(5) In mid-February, the family travelled to Florida especially for the benefit of the AFS student. The trip was made in a camper, and proved difficult because of the AFSer's unwillingness to make a number of adjustments required by the journey. By the time the family returned home, the host parents were quite unhappy with the experience of hosting this student. But they seemed resigned to continuing through the remainder of the year in this state of dissatisfaction.

(6) In mid-May, the student suffered a moderate injury to his knee and was forced to remain off his feet for a week or two. At this time he seemed to lose some of his arrogance and bravado, and to be able for the first time to admit that he, too, was a vulnerable human being. The family began to like him better at this time. In the last weeks of the sojourn, the student and the 16-year-old host brother formed a closer, warmer relationship than they had had any time previously. This improved relationship was made possible, in part, because school was over and they had more time to do things together. (Previously, during the school year, their separate interests had necessitated their seeing relatively little of one another.)

The major dynamic that seems to have operated in the case of Family D was the difficult personality of the AFS student.

Family E

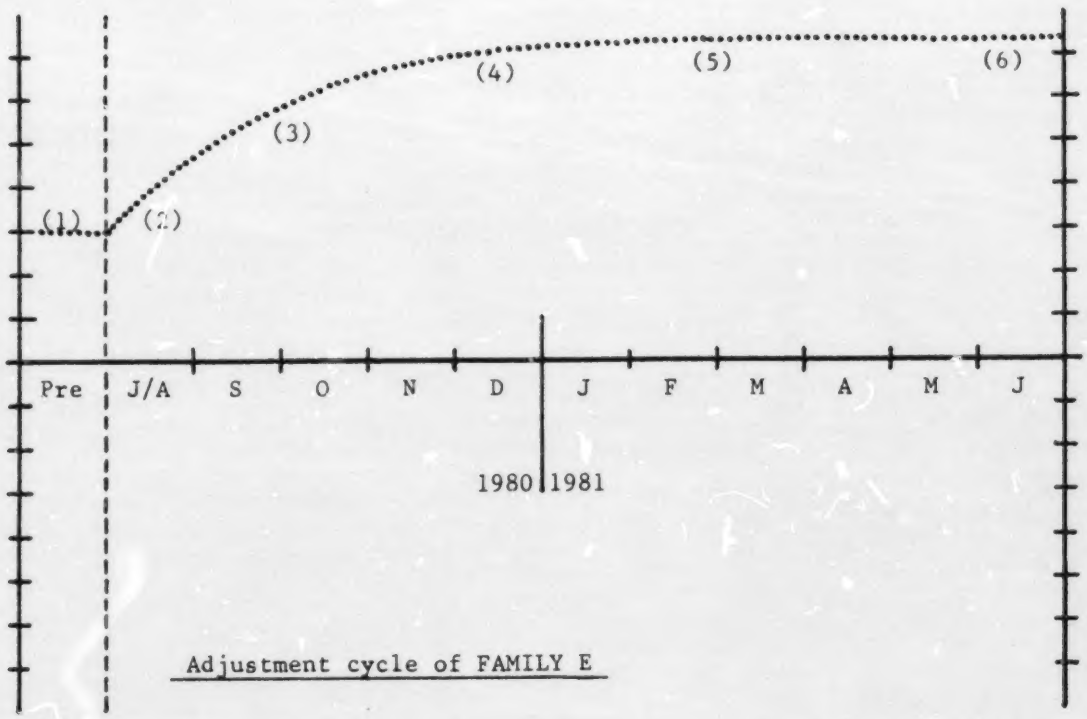
Family E lives not far from Philadelphia in a middle class suburb with medium- to large-sized houses set on large lots. The father, 50, holds a Ph.D. and is professor of psychology at a nearby college; he also specializes in working with young drug addicts on a long-term basis. The mother, 48, holds a masters degree and is a public high school teacher whose classes in social studies and world cultures are populated mostly by "enriched" students. There is one child, a daughter of 14 who is described by her parents as difficult in some respects. Much of this girl's time is spent in a very close relationship with another girl of 15 who lives nearby, and who is virtually another member of Family E. The daughter is not heavily involved in extracurricular activities at school, but makes reasonably good grades. Of the five families described in this report, Family E is the only one to whom the term "intellectual" fairly applies; both parents do a considerable amount of professional reading, peruse several national newspapers each day, and discuss politics and current events frequently with each other. The daughter seems not to be intellectually inclined to the extent that her parents are, and resents their "nagging" about her studies and grades. The family is not especially active in community affairs and does not attend church, but they have good relations with neighbors and nearby friends. Both parents are from Georgia, and visits in one direction or the other occur at least once each year. The mother was the force behind the family's decision to host; she was motivated by her strong intellectual interest in world affairs and her feeling of wanting to do something concrete to demonstrate her commitment to internationalism. The father was not opposed to the idea of hosting, but needed to be convinced. The daughter was dubious about the idea, and accepted her parents' decision rather reluctantly. Family E had hosted two young women (simultaneously) for several weeks some years earlier, and due to their constant contact with teenagers and youth could be said to have rather realistic expectations about the hosting experience.

The student placed with Family E was a female from Italy, age 16, who came from a highly intellectual family; both of her parents are university professors. Her command of English was good, and she had travelled extensively throughout portions of Europe--especially Austria, her mother's native country. She was described as respectful and mature, as getting along well with adults, and as "willing to communicate." But she was also described as shy, timid, and reflective, qualities that inhibited her from demonstrating the brilliance she was known to possess. Technically, this student seemed an excellent choice from the point of view of the host parents, but not necessarily from the point of view of their daughter.

The pattern of adjustment followed by Family E during the course of the year is illustrated by the chart at the top of the following page. The numbers in parentheses are references to the explanatory comments below.

(1) Family E approached the hosting experience with realistic expectations due to their extensive professional contact with young people and one previous hosting experience. Their daughter, however, approached hosting reluctantly.

(2) The Italian girl made a very good impression initially, and soon showed herself to be a marvelous and charming person in every respect. She and her host sister steadily developed a satisfactory relationship. There were no adjustment and settling-in problems.



Adjustment cycle of FAMILY E

(3) During the fall, the quality of this family's experience went from good to better. The AFSer and the host sister established a warm, close friendship; the parents reported enthusiastically that the AFSer was actually having a beneficial effect on their daughter in terms of her interest in studying and her general behavior. The relationship between the daughter and her long-time neighborhood friend remained undamaged. The host parents were enormously pleased.

(4) The holiday season passed very successfully in spite of the fact that the family drove to Georgia to visit relatives, a journey that proved physically difficult and (for the AFSer) socially demanding. By this time the host family and the student's natural family had established a warm relationship through frequent correspondence and occasional telephone chats; the host father even was corresponding regularly with his "pen-pal," the AFSer's 11-year-old brother.

(5) In the early spring, the family took a two-week trip to Hawaii, which was a great success. By this time the host sister and the AFSer were so well adjusted and comfortable with each other that they were able to fight and make-up. The host sister was asking her parents if the family could host again the following year. The entire family was beginning to dread the day of the student's departure.

(6) Family E's experience continued to be wonderful in every conceivable way right up to the final moment. Said the father, "We didn't have a single bad day during the entire year!"

The major dynamic that seems to have operated in the case of Family E was the delightful personality of the AFS student.

1981-1982 Phase of this Research

During the 1981-1982 hosting year, the Research Department of AFS International plans to document the experiences of seven additional host families. These families, and their respective AFS students, have the following characteristics:

- Family F lives in central Pennsylvania and is composed of a father who is a laborer, a mother who does domestic work for other families in the community, and two teenage children, an older girl and a younger boy. This family lives in a village with a population of about 200. They will host a boy from Chile.

- Family G lives in central New York State and is composed of a recently widowed mother living with a daughter, the youngest of her nine children. The mother is employed in a small bank. This family lives in a town with a population of about 2500. They will host a girl from Japan.

- Family H lives in extreme northern New York State, where they operate a dairy farm. The family is composed of the parents, who both farm, and the two youngest daughters, age 17 and 15. This family will host a boy from Caracas, Venezuela.

- Family I lives in southern New York State and is composed of a father who is a college librarian, a mother who is a kindergarten teacher, and two teenage children, an older boy and a younger girl. This family lives in a community of about 3000 people. They will host a boy from Sri Lanka.

- Family J lives in southern New York State and is composed of a father who is a manufacturing engineer, a mother who works in a retail store on a part-time basis, and two children, a 15-year-old son and a 12-year-old daughter. They live in a town of about 7000. This family will host a boy from Kenya.

- Family K lives in western Pennsylvania and is composed of a father who is an industrial engineer, a mother who is a full-time homemaker, and four children: a boy of 17, a girl of 16, a boy of 10, and a girl of 8. This family lives in a town having under 1000 inhabitants. They will host a boy from Ireland.

- Family L lives in western New York State and is composed of a father who is temporarily unemployed, a mother who works part-time as a substitute mail carrier, and two teenage daughters. They live in rural community of about 6000 located 20 miles from a medium-sized city. They will host a girl from Jordan.

Final Report of Both Phases of this Research

The final report of The Study of the Dynamics of Hosting should be available in mid-1983. Individuals who may be interested in receiving the final report of this research project should send their names and complete addresses to:

Research Department
AFS International
313 East 43rd Street
New York, NY 10017, USA

Preliminary Report, 1981-82 Phase

THE STUDY OF THE DYNAMICS OF HOSTING

December 1982

by: Neal Grove & Bettina Hansel
Research Department
AFS International

This is the second of three preliminary reports of the findings of AFS's *Study of the Dynamics of Hosting*. The first report, which concerns the 1980-81 phase of this project, begins with statements describing the purpose and nature of this multi-year research effort; that report may be obtained without charge from the Research Department of AFS International (313 East 43rd Street, New York, NY 10017, USA). We assume that readers of the present report are familiar with the background information contained in the first one.

During the 1981-82 hosting year, seven U.S. host families agreed to participate in this study. (These families were located considerably farther from New York City than were the five families who participated during 1980-81.) Let us now consider the patterns of adjustment over time that were exhibited by these seven student-family groups.

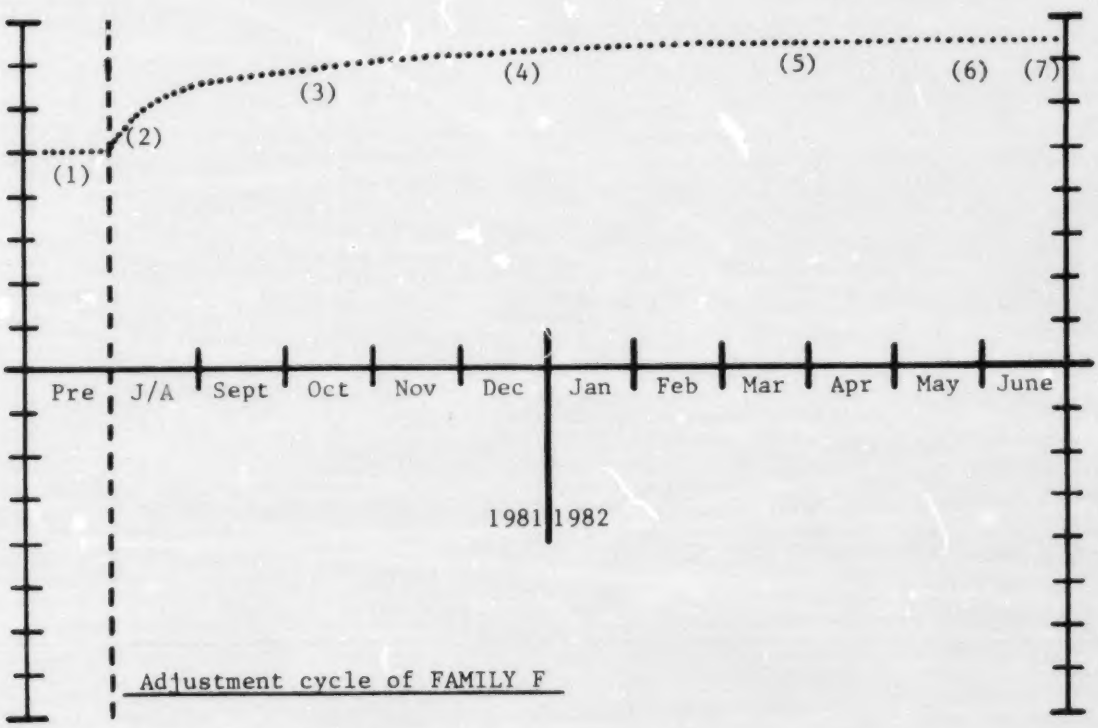
Family F

Family F lives in central Pennsylvania in the smallest (population 260) of three towns within a rural area. The father, 43, had been a union carpenter and foreman in earlier years, but by personal choice now works as a laborer in the shipping department of a large corporation; he also serves as the elected vice president of the town council. The mother, 38, hires herself out to do domestic work in households in the area and is a part-time clerk at the local post office. Both parents are officers of their church and devote much time to its activities. There are two children. The daughter, 19, is a senior in a special education class at the local high school, where she is involved in several extracurricular activities; she also spends much time as a volunteer in the local library and nursing home, and is a leading member of a youth group at a church different from that attended by her parents. The son, 15, is a dedicated junior member of the local volunteer fire brigade and has a flourishing little business mowing many of the lawns in town. The atmosphere in this family's home is relaxed and spontaneous yet orderly, with no one appearing to dominate events. The home itself recently was remodeled by the family with the assistance of friends and members of their extended families. Next door to Family F lives their closest friends and mentors, an older couple

whose children all have grown up and who have been active in AFS for many years; through this family, Family F came into contact with many AFS students and were inspired to host at the point when their children reached appropriate ages. They also had been of major assistance to a Vietnamese refugee family who lived just down the block: their pleasure in this relationship also helped to provide them with both motivation and confidence with respect to hosting an AFS student.

The student placed with Family F was a male from Chile, aged 17, who was the youngest child of a large family in which every member was currently, or at one time had been, active in the affairs of AFS/Chile. (Three of his siblings had been Year Program students to the United States between 1969 and 1976.) The student himself never had traveled outside of Chile, where his family lived in a little village about ten miles from a major city. The student's natural family was described as being of a "middle to high cultural level," as "relating well to each other, with lots of comprehension and respect," and as "projecting strong patterns of intellectual pursuits." Except insofar as Family F could not fairly be described as being strong in intellectual pursuits, this placement seemed to be quite reasonable from a technical standpoint.

The pattern of adjustment shown by Family F is illustrated on the chart immediately below. The numbers in parentheses are references to the comments that begin at the top of the following page.



Adjustment cycle of FAMILY F

(1) Family F approached the hosting experience with very positive expectations due to the many favorable contacts they had had over the years with AFS students. The host brother seemed not to mind having to give up his small bedroom for the AFSer, after which his "room" was a landing in the stairwell.

(2) The AFSer made a very favorable impression on Family F. He fit into their daily routine effortlessly and began at once to help around the house without being asked. The family felt almost instantly that the Chilean was an excellent match for them.

(3) By October it was abundantly clear to all that this placement was ideal in numerous respects. The student was integrating himself smoothly and thoroughly into the home, the school, and the community. He got along will with the host brother in spite of not sharing his interest in fire fighting, and he very rapidly developed a warm relationship with the host sister. Simultaneously, he was making friends at the school, and was successfully carrying out his avowed purpose of avoiding the limiting of his friendships to any single clique of students. Most notably, the AFSer was at this point beginning a relationship with a senior girl who had access to a car, who was content to drive him around, and who preferred to pay her own way on dates. This happy arrangement helped relieve Family F of some of the normal pressures associated with hosting.

(4) Christmas found the AFSer feeling a bit homesick, but the family allowed him to telephone his family in Chile, which perked him up. The AFSer at this time was slowly becoming closer to the host brother while remaining close to the host sister; his relationship with his American girlfriend already was quite stable by this time. The only problem on the host parents' minds was how little the basketball coach was allowing the student (and, indeed, the entire second-string squad) to play during regulation games. But the student himself never openly complained about this situation.

(5) As winter passed and spring began, this homestay continued on its highly satisfactory course for all concerned. There was no drama except in brief and inconsequential "fussing and feuding" occasionally among the three teenagers; there were no surprises except in the practical jokes that family members played on each other during April Fools Day . . . and at other times as well. Family F already was dreading the day of the student's departure.

(6) As the end of the school year drew near, there were more and more opportunities for the AFSer, his girlfriend, and their circle of friends to do things together. The host sister was not a member of this circle, probably in large measure because it was made up of some of the brightest students (plus three other foreign exchange students). Although the host sister apparently viewed the AFSer as her brother rather than as a potential boyfriend, she nonetheless became overtly jealous whenever the AFSer's girlfriend was around the house. The host parents skillfully handled the resulting difficult moments and defended the student's right to move freely among his own group of friends. The relationship between the student and the host sister may have cooled because of these episodes, but only slightly if at all. The AFSer's relationship with the host brother meanwhile had become quite solid.

(7) In the last week before the student's departure, he was honored and feted not only by his host family and circle of friends, but also by virtually everyone

in the neighborhood and even by people in the wider community. The host family was exceedingly unhappy to see him depart.

A major dynamic that seems to have operated in the case of Family F was the excellent suitability of the Chilean student for the type of homestay and community experience routinely provided by AFS.*

Family G

Family G lives on the main highway two miles outside of a small town of 2500 in central New York State. They live in a large ranch-style house with six bedrooms and two living rooms. The mother, a widow aged 57, works as a mortgage clerk in a bank where she has been employed since 1942. The father died in 1980 after a long illness. Family G includes nine children. The youngest, a girl of 16, is involved in sports, especially cross-country running, and participates in school activities such as chorus, science club, AFS, and the annual musical production. (At the time the family applied to AFS, she was the only child expected to be living at home during the AFSer's homestay.) The remaining eight children range in age from 18 to 32. The three youngest, two sons and a daughter, are living and studying at colleges in New York State. A son of 25 is a bachelor living in the vicinity. The four oldest daughters are also living in the vicinity; they all are married and have children (although two were separated from their husbands at the time the homestay began). Since all of these grown children live close by, family get-togethers are frequent, and family members turn to each other for support. In addition to the grown children, Family G's extended family includes the mother's brother and sister and their families, whose homes are situated on either side of Family G's; the mother's 81-year-old mother who lives in the nearby town; and the father's sister, aunt, and uncle. Although family-focused activities occupy most of this family's free time, both the mother and the youngest daughter have their own set of friends whom they see regularly. The family is Protestant; the mother attends church regularly while the daughter goes only occasionally. The daughter became interested in hosting through her involvement in the high school AFS club. The mother readily agreed to host because, with just the two of them remaining in their large house, she felt it would be nice to have another teenager around.

The student placed with Family G was a female from Japan, aged 18, an only child who was herself from a family made up of her and her mother. The student played guitar in a rock band, and was involved in club activities and outdoor sports. She and her mother were devout Buddists. She had visited the U.S. for one month some two years previously and was interested in returning for a longer stay. She was described as a kind and self-reliant girl and as people-oriented. Her interests and activities were compatible with those of the 16-year-old host sister. Although the Japanese AFSer was not used to the type of large family gatherings

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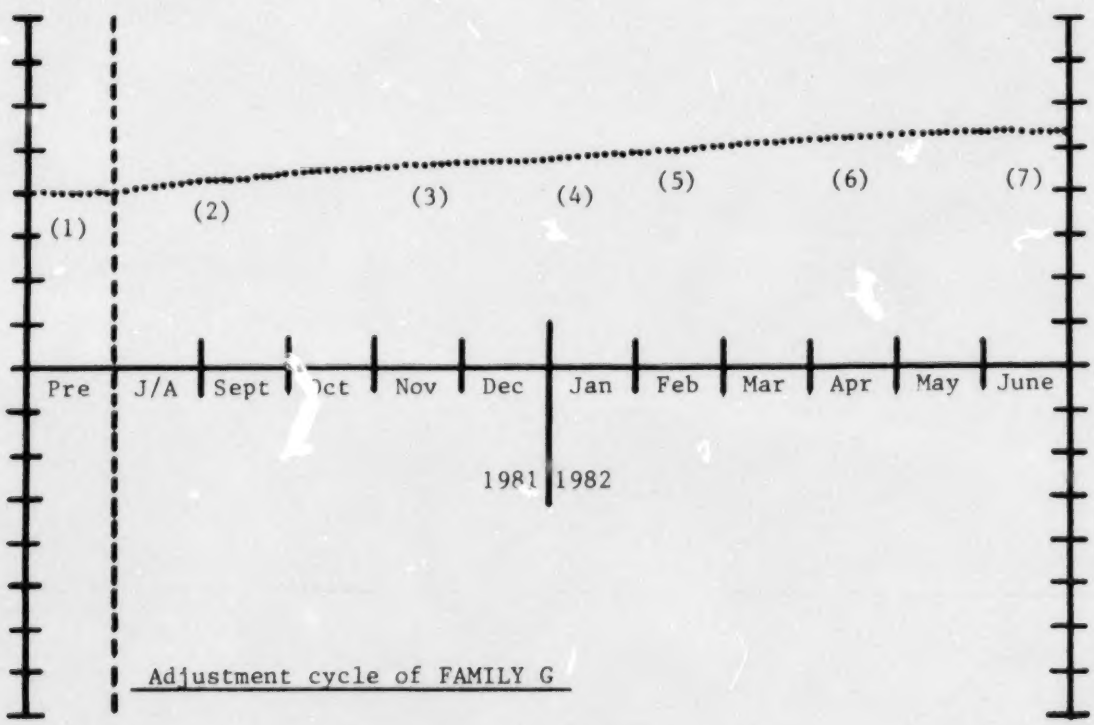
* For each host family, only one "major dynamic" will be noted. Clearly, numerous factors combine to make an experience involving several individuals and lasting ten or eleven months; these will be explored in the final report of this research.

typical of Family G, living with only the host mother and teenaged host sister seemed similar to her life in her natural family.

The pattern of adjustment followed by Family G is illustrated on the chart at the bottom of this page. The numbers in parentheses are references to the comments that follow.

(1) Family G approached the hosting experience with fairly high expectations. They anticipated some problems but were not worried about them; in general, they looked forward to the experience.

(2) Very few problems were encountered in the initial adjustment period. The student did her share of the housework, including some cooking and her own laundry, and she felt free to help herself to food from the kitchen. She and her host sister developed a good relationship, and the latter actively included the AFSer in her activities and tried to help her overcome some of her shyness at school. The student was not shy within the home, however, and got along well with the extended family, even to the point of returning the teasing that was typical of one of the brothers-in-law. On occasion, however, the AFSer did become overwhelmed by the commotion of all the children and grandchildren, and would then retreat to her room. The host family was not at all troubled by this behavior; they knew from the student that she rather envied their large family, and they appreciated the fact that it might take some time for her to get used to having so many people around at one time. It was during this early period that the host sister decided to apply for the AFS Summer Program. Also during this period, the bachelor son moved back home, but his presence seemed to cause no appreciable difference in the host family routine.



Adjustment cycle of FAMILY G

(3) The homestay continued to progress smoothly. However, the AFSer was having a little trouble in school. She found it difficult to make friends with students who change classes every period. She liked her host sister's friends, but they were a year younger and she wanted to make friends in her own class. The student discussed this problem with her host mother and with someone from the local chapter, and came to realize that she herself would have to be the one to make the effort. When she did, her situation improved. The host sister enjoyed having the AFSer as a sister; since there was a bit of a gap in age between the next youngest sister and herself, the host sister found that she was able to share more of her activities with the student than she had been able to do with her own sisters.

(4) The relationship between the AFSer and the family remained stable. The bachelor son moved out again when he located another apartment in the vicinity. One of the separated daughters gained visiting privileges with her three children every other weekend, and since she lived in an apartment with two roommates, she brought her children to her mother's house on these weekends and remained with them there. The holidays went well with three more children home from college. The AFSer seemed absorbed by all the goings-on. She continued to get along well with everyone, especially with the daughter in college, who invited her to visit the campus and to stay with her there.

(5) In February, the daughter who had been staying in the family home on alternating weekends with her children moved back in with Family G. Her children continued to visit her there on alternating weekends; no problems developed because of this change. The student and the newly-arrived host sister frequently did the household shopping and other chores together. The three young children enjoyed having the AFSer around, and she in turn was happy to spend some time entertaining them. In general, the homestay experience continued on its steady, even course.

(6) The 16-year-old host sister learned that she had been accepted by AFS to go to Brazil for the summer. The Easter holidays were uneventful, although the three college-aged children were again home on vacation. The Japanese student continued to get along well with everyone, and developed a particularly close relationship with the 21-year-old host sister who had invited her to visit her college. The AFSer also enjoyed late-night talks with the host mother, and participated in family games and teasing. Everyone was enjoying the hosting experience.

(7) The end of the year was filled with parties and farewells. The 16-year-old host sister left for Brazil, and a few days later the 21-year-old host sister returned from college. But despite these comings and goings and those of the other members of this large family, the hosting experience continued to be smooth and positive until the end.

A major dynamic that seems to have operaged in the case of Family G was its size. Since this family already contained so many different people, it was relatively easy for them to adjust to one more.

Family H

Family H operates a dairy farm of 350 acres in a rural area of extreme northern New York State, where they moved in the late 1970s following a series of reverses

on a farm in their native state of Ohio. Both mother and father are 43 years old, and both devote their time and considerable energy almost exclusively to the highly demanding work associated with the milking and maintenance of their herd of cows. The father, a large and strong yet affable person, is acknowledged by all other family members to be a commanding influence in their lives. There are four children. The oldest is a daughter, 22, a student at a school of nursing in another part of the state. The second is a son, 21, a junior at a college in Indiana. (He left college and returned home during the period of the study.) The third is a daughter, 18, a high school senior who is very active in a variety of sports as well as in several other extracurricular activities. (This daughter will be termed the "middle" daughter.) The youngest is a daughter, 16, a sophomore at the same school who also is active in a variety of sports. Except when away at school, all the children play an active role in carrying out the many tasks of the farm. This, in addition to their devout Roman Catholicism, makes this family stand out as exceptionally unified and single-minded. It should be noted that Family H is sharing in the deep financial difficulties plaguing farmers throughout the U.S. during the early 1980s. Under similar circumstances, most families would not have entertained for a moment the notion of hosting an exchange student, but Family H took the attitude that feeding one more person merely meant dividing the food seven ways instead of six. (Their willingness to share their severely stretched resources is further confirmed by their acceptance into the family, during the time that the AFS student was in the home, of yet another teenager, a girl of 15.) It was the middle daughter who provided the initial impetus for the family to host; more than a year previously, she had become friendly with an AFS student whose locker was near hers. The family readily agreed to the idea, and applied to host in 1980-81; however, they were turned down that year in favor of another family, and were asked to wait until 1981-82, when the middle daughter would be a senior.

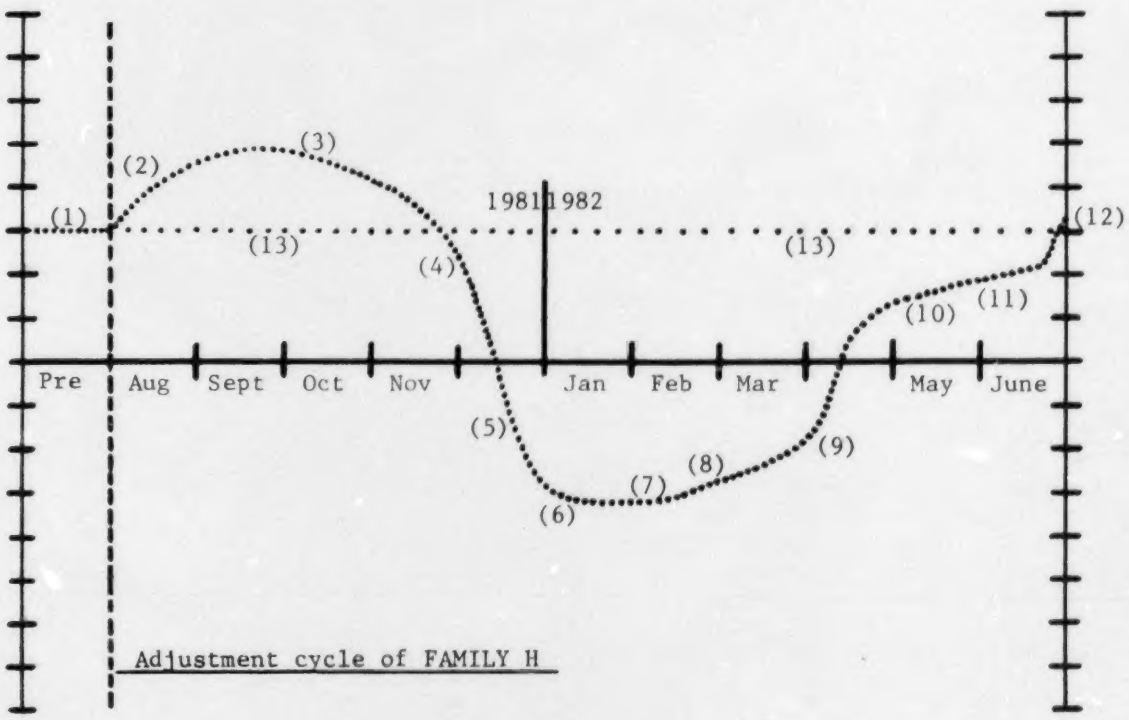
The student placed with Family H was a male from Caracas, Venezuela; he was 18 years old and had a marginal knowledge of English and some experience traveling with relatives in Europe and North America (including the U.S.). He was described as being shy, well disciplined, and "cooperative and helpful in the performance of common activities or pastimes." His principal interest was music -- he played both piano and organ -- and his most enjoyed participant sport was (like that of Family H) swimming. His parents owned and operated a photography shop and were termed "upper middle class" economically, but only "middle class" socially and intellectually. The father was said to "dominate the household" but also to be very courteous and gentle in his dealings with others. The student (who had a brother of 13 and a sister of 15) expressed a strong desire to have host *brothers* very close to his own age with whom to share activities. On paper, then, this placement appeared challenging to all parties: (a) The student was coming from a modern city of three million people to an isolated rural farm. (b) The student was coming from an affluent background to a home involved constantly in economic hardship. (c) The student was coming from a relatively effortless life to one where backbreaking toil occurred from before dawn until after dark. (d) The student was coming from a temperate climate into a cold and damp one. (e) The student was entering a family in which the only host brother was slated to be away at college most of the time.

The pattern of adjustment followed by Family H during the course of the year is illustrated on the chart at the bottom of this page. The numbers in parentheses are references to the comments that follow.

(1) Family H approached the hosting experience with positive expectations, though these were tempered by concern over whether an affluent city youth could adapt to the life of a hard-working farm family, and by the realization that their financial situation had eroded further since they had agreed to host. They also wondered whether the AFSer could fit into their pattern of extremely close intra-familial relationships. They expected the Venezuelan boy to share all their activities, but were *not* merely seeking an extra farm hand through AFS.

(2) The initial impression made by the Venezuelan student was favorable; although shy, he appeared to be polite and helpful, and was thought to possess a great sense of humor. Since he seemed to fit in well with the family, his considerable difficulty in speaking and understanding English was overlooked. On the other hand, his lack of experience and ability with respect to hard, sustained physical labor became apparent almost at once. And, even at this early stage, the family correctly anticipated that the AFSer would find life especially hard during the long and bitterly cold winter characteristic of upstate New York.

(3) Beginning in October, the family became preoccupied with a growing series of problems. (Note that the father did not share in this preoccupation -- see paragraph 13 below.) The AFSer's almost withdrawn manner began to get on their nerves, and they came to characterize him as lacking in initiative. Never an enthusiastic participant in the work in the barn, the student asked during October to be ex-



Adjustment cycle of FAMILY H

empted from all future assistance there on the grounds that the silage was causing his hair to fall out. (The presumed link between silage and hair loss had been suggested to him by a member of his natural family during one of his frequent telephone conversations with them.) The host mother took the AFSer to the family's general practitioner, who opined that the student's hair loss, if significant, was more likely to be due to hereditary causes. (The AFSer's natural father is bald.) The pointed refusal of the student to assist at the focal point of the host family's life (the barn) could only have a negative effect on the family's feelings about the experience of hosting him. At about this time, the AFSer also contacted a local AFS representative to complain about the rigors of rural life, and the representative spoke with the host parents; however, no significant counseling took place.

(4) During November, the middle and youngest daughters began to feel increasingly cold toward the AFSer and eventually "gave up" on him, citing the problems already mentioned as well as his obvious lack of progress in learning to speak English well. This attitude, in turn, caused them to feel disappointed in themselves, which further soured their experience of hosting. On the other hand, the AFSer took some steps to redeem himself by successfully repairing several items of electrical equipment, by splitting and carrying much of the wood used to heat the house, and by routinely performing a number of other household chores.

(5) During December, in another of his frequent telephone conversations with his natural family and friends, the student was advised that his hair loss possibly was due to his drinking of the unprocessed milk obtained by the host family from their own cows. He seized on this explanation and immediately refused to drink the milk, to the enormous annoyance of the host mother. The family's son came home from college at Christmas and remained home thereafter due to the financial straits into which the family had fallen. His assistance with the work of the farm made life a little easier for the other family members. The son's relationship with the AFSer underwent some strains at first, but then settled down. The refusal of the student to work in the barn came to be viewed by the son as a matter of comparatively small significance. In the mother's opinion, the return of the son exacerbated the situation somewhat because the AFSer seemed to feel deprived of the attentions of the females when he was no longer the only boy in the household.

(6) During January, the host mother took the student to a dermatologist for a thorough examination of his hair and scalp. The dermatologist flatly stated that the student's supposed hair loss could *not* be a consequence of his drinking the raw milk, but was more likely due to nervousness; but the dermatologist also questioned whether the student actually had a *medically significant* hair-loss problem, and he asked the AFSer to count the number of hairs he was losing over a period of several weeks. (The upshot was that the student was found *not* to have a serious hair-loss problem.) After this examination, the student resumed drinking the raw milk; but the damage he had done by refusing to drink the milk in the first place was not completely eliminated by this change. Meanwhile, the winter had become bitterly cold -- even colder than usual for the region. The low ebb in the hosting experience for Family H coincided largely with the cold weather.*

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* Saying that the low ebb occurred during the coldest weather is not necessarily to imply a direct causal relationship between inclement weather and negative feelings.

(7) In mid-February, the youngest daughter spoke directly to the AFSer, advising him to talk more with members of the family and to show more initiative.* This open appeal seemed to result in the student's making a greater effort to become a part of the family. Another factor that may have helped him to open up more was his participation in the preparations for the high school play, which he was enjoying greatly. However, the overall situation from the family's point of view only slightly improved.

(8) In late February, a female classmate of the youngest daughter came to spend the night -- and never went back home (except for occasional visits).** The reasons why she moved in with Family H seem related to the fact that she had no siblings at home and was beginning to get into trouble when she was with friends away from home. Although for some weeks she acted in a spoiled manner, as she would have in her own house, she integrated herself soon enough into the life of Family H. But in doing so she offered an unmistakable contrast between herself and the still-floundering Venezuelan who had lived in the household since the previous August.

(9) In early April, as spring finally was in evidence, the parents departed for a one-week vacation and the five teenagers (two daughters, one son, one local girl, and the AFSer) were left in charge of the farm. The AFSer was able to use this occasion to get on better terms with the others, especially with the son. The family began to feel more positive about the hosting experience beginning at roughly this point in time.

(10) The oldest daughter returned home from nursing school in mid-May, but her presence caused little alteration in the development of the situation. The student by this time was solidifying a close relationship with the son, and was becoming noticeably closer with the youngest daughter. The middle daughter was feeling better disposed toward the student than she had felt at any time during the winter, but she did not progress to a state of personal closeness with him.

(11) In early June, the host mother took the student aside and remonstrated with him over his failure to become a fully functioning member of Family H. The student clearly was upset by this direct criticism, but no immediate changes in his attitudes or behavior were noted. Most members of the family were not even aware that the mother had spoken to the AFSer in this fashion. Then, with only one week left before the day of his departure, the AFSer suddenly appeared one day in the barn and began helping to carry out the work there. The reaction of the family members to this eleventh-hour reformation was generally quite positive, but they

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* The researcher's visit to interview family members in late January may have been responsible, indirectly, for the younger daughter's admonishment of the student. Although the researcher (Grove) offered no advice, he did listen sympathetically to the two daughters discuss their guilt feelings over having "given up" on the student (see paragraph 4). Apparently greatly relieved over having been able to unburden themselves to someone who understood their problems and feelings, the daughters resolved to try harder to rectify the situation. For a discussion of a similar case, see *Occasional Papers in Intercultural Learning*, No. 2 (November 1982), pp. 12-13. (Available without charge from the AFS Research Department.)

** At the time this Preliminary Report was being written (December 1982), this young girl was still residing in the home of Family H.

offered differing interpretations of its causes and significance. The mother was reluctant to take credit (in spite of her talk with the student) for his reappearance in the barn.

(12) When the student departed, tears were shed by most members of the family. The son and the youngest daughter seemed the most grieved to see him leave, and there was some talk of the youngest daughter's visiting him in Venezuela and of his returning to attend her graduation. But the mother reported that she was relieved to see the student go and that she was not in favor of hosting again.

(13) Almost nothing has been said about the father's reactions to the hosting experience because they differed markedly from those of the other family members. The father stated throughout the year that he understood the purpose of the homestay to be the provision of an educational experience for the student. He saw himself in the role of a teacher or mentor to the student, and seemed not to follow the pattern of emotional ups and down of the other members of the family because he always felt that he was performing that role adequately and was making a long-lasting impact on the life on the Venezuelan student. During one interview he said, referring to the AFSer: "He's not supposed to be happy, he's supposed to learn. Poor kid -- his mom and dad gave him everything." And whereas the mother felt critical of AFS for placing a wealthy student from a major metropolis on a poor and isolated farm, the father's view was that such a placement potentially yielded maximum educational benefit for the student. A comment made by the mother in reference to the father is also important in understanding the latter's separate line on the chart on page 8: "Little things don't bother him."

A major dynamic that seems to have operated in the case of Family H was the inability and/or unwillingness of the AFS student to participate fully and wholeheartedly in the interpersonal and economic life of the host family.

Family J*

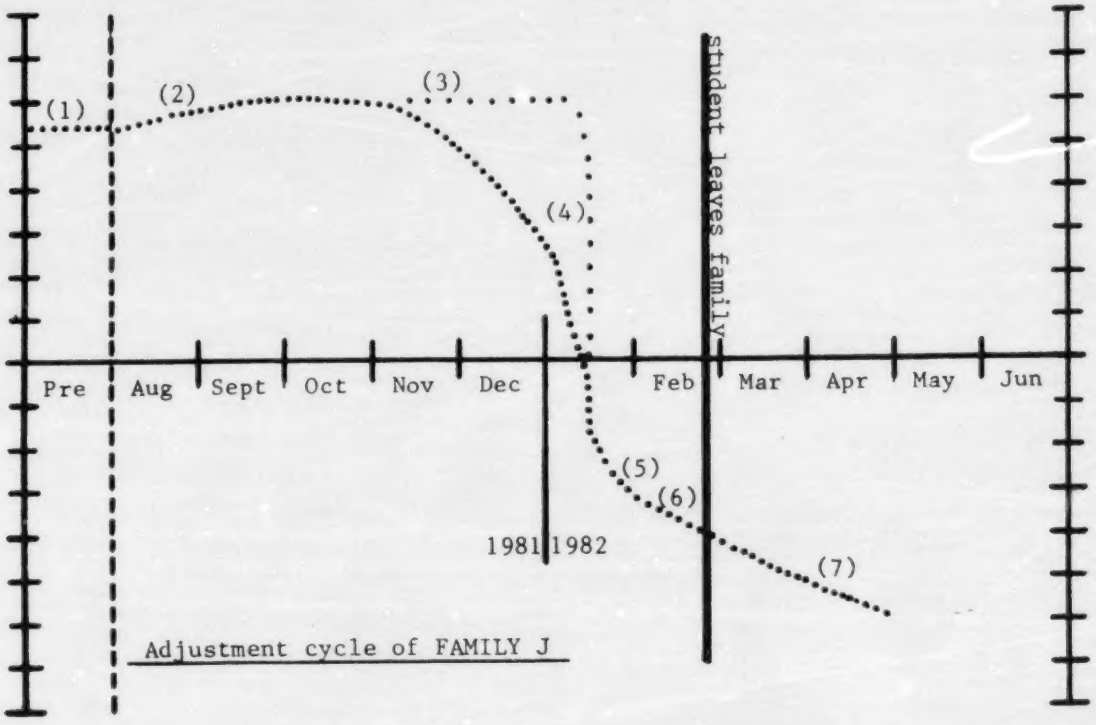
Family J lives in a large ranch-style home at the edge of a small rural town of 4200 in upstate New York. The father, 53, is a truck driver who was unemployed when the hosting experience began; he found a job while the AFS student was with the family. The mother, 51, works as a rural mail carrier. Of their five children, two daughters remain at home while an older son and two older daughters are married. Of the daughters at home, the older is 19; she attends a community college in the vicinity where she takes a very heavy course load -- 24 credit hours, including four courses in chemistry. In her spare time she paints and does ceramic work. The youngest daughter, 17, is very involved in school activities, especially marching band. She also enjoys knitting and crafts projects. The father's parents live in an apartment attached to the garage. The family is Roman Catholic, and their religion is very important to them. Family J has a cottage on a nearby lake where they spend much of the summer swimming and boating. Week-

* At this point, the letters identified with the various families depart from the order established on page 14 of the July 1981 report of this project. (There, this family was "Family L.") The changes were a matter of convenience only.

ends and evenings are mostly family times, and the married children who live nearby often come for dinner during the weekends. The 19-year-old daughter made friends with AFS students during her last year in high school, and introduced them to her family. This sparked the family's interest in hosting. The mother mentioned that hosting an exchange student would be a special experience for the youngest daughter because none of the other children had had an opportunity to host.

The student placed with Family J was a female from Jordan, aged 16. She was seen by the committee there as a quiet girl with a nice personality who was very close to and dependent upon her mother, a widow. The student had a brother who had studied in England and another brother who was currently studying in California. She herself had traveled in England on one occasion. Surprisingly, her religion was Roman Catholic. The student's mother was very anxious that her daughter have host sisters, and did not want a teenaged or older boy in the host family. The placement looked quite satisfactory on paper because Family J had only teenaged girls at home, and because they were seen as offering the kind of warm, family-centered atmosphere that the student needed.

The pattern of adjustment followed by Family J is illustrated by the chart at the bottom of this page. The numbers in parentheses are references to the explanatory comments that begin at the top of the following page.



(1) Family J was very excited about the prospect of hosting a student from Jordan, and were curious to learn about her culture. They approached the hosting experience with fairly high expectations. Their enthusiasm increased after they met the brother of the AFSer; he had been in Boston when he learned of his sister's placement, and he traveled to meet Family J and visited with them for 24 hours.

(2) The experience seemed to get off to a good start. The host parents were very pleased with the AFSer's general good behavior, especially when they compared stories with other host parents in the vicinity who had experienced difficulty in enforcing curfews and other rules. Unlike the girls in Family J who spent little time at home studying, the Jordanian girl worked very hard at her homework and made special efforts to improve her English vocabulary. The host parents were impressed by her studiousness. Family J did not feel close to the student during the early weeks, but they believed that closeness would develop over time. They noted some jealousy on the part of their youngest daughter, but this was relatively minor; furthermore, there seemed to be no doubt that this host sister wanted the student to remain.

(3) Around the first of November, the adjustment line for this family should be divided into two separate courses. On the surface, the experience of Family J remained positive (line with dots spaced farther apart). The student was not presenting any problems for the family, and they continued to look forward to the time when she would become a real family member. However, the closeness they had hoped for was not developing, and they were becoming increasingly disappointed that the AFSer kept to herself so much in order to study. However, they kept this disappointment to themselves and were careful not to force the student to abandon her studies in order to participate more in family life. The host parents were not sure how much authority they had over the student in matters of this sort, and felt that in many cases they could not insist on certain things the way they would in the case of their own daughters. All in all, they felt it was best to be patient and tolerant, and they hoped that the AFSer would warm up to them in time. The other line on the chart (the one with the dots spaced close together) reflects the family's growing disappointment that the student had not integrated herself into the daily life of their home.

(4) Over the next couple of months, the student spent a great deal of time in her room studying. The family had difficulty drawing her into family activities of any kind. She gained about thirty pounds, mostly from eating candy. She also made or received weekly phone calls from her brother in California. At first, the family had thought that these phone calls would help keep the student from becoming homesick. But they eventually came to view these frequent calls as creating problems because the student felt compelled to follow her brother's advice, and to pay no attention to the needs or opinions of her host parents. Another factor in this deteriorating situation was that the job situations of both parents changed. The host father began working long, strange hours as a trucker, and the host mother (who previously had carried mail only on Saturdays) began working a full-time mail route. These changed put additional pressures on the family, but they felt that they could not turn down these opportunities. They were still happy to continue hosting the Jordanian girl despite these new problems. What they did not realize, however, was the extent of the student's unhappiness. One day in January the AFSer broke down in tears while at school; immediate assistance was provided

to her by a member of the local AFS Chapter. When the Chapter informed the host family that the AFSer was deeply unhappy, the host parents were both saddened and perplexed.

(5) Counselling sessions with the student-family liaison brought out some previously undiscussed problems. The older sister, in particular, had become tired of the "rude" fashion in which the AFSer asked for favors, although this was discovered to be a problem of word usage and intonation stemming from the Jordanian's native language, and not intended rudeness. Other problems were less easy to solve. The student felt that the family did not want to share themselves with her, and the family could not understand why the student felt this way. Both the student and the family agreed to try harder to make the placement work, yet it was difficult for the family to know how to improve their own contribution to the situation because they did not understand the underlying causes of the difficulties. The host family began to complain that the local AFS Chapter had not offered them sufficient advice from the beginning.

(6) Family J took deliberate steps to include the student more frequently in their activities, and the student made an effort to join in. However, despite these efforts, the student remained unhappy and finally asked the AFS Chapter to find her another host family. She blamed the younger host sister to a large extent for the failure of the placement, saying that she "just couldn't get along with her"; but she professed to "love the parents dearly." The host family was confused, disappointed, and very upset.

(7) The AFSer departed from Family J's home late in February, but the experience of the host family did not end at that time. They became even more upset as they heard that the student was spreading stories about them, particularly that they were keeping some of her clothes. They continued to wonder why the student had been unhappy while living with them, and they speculated about what they might have done to make her feel more comfortable and accepted. The younger sister was hurt that she had been blamed for the failure of the experience, and said that the AFSer was refusing to talk with her at school. The host family also was deeply hurt that the AFSer made no effort of any kind to contact them after her departure from their home.

A major dynamic that seems to have operated in the case of Family J was the lack of communication between the student and the members of the host family.

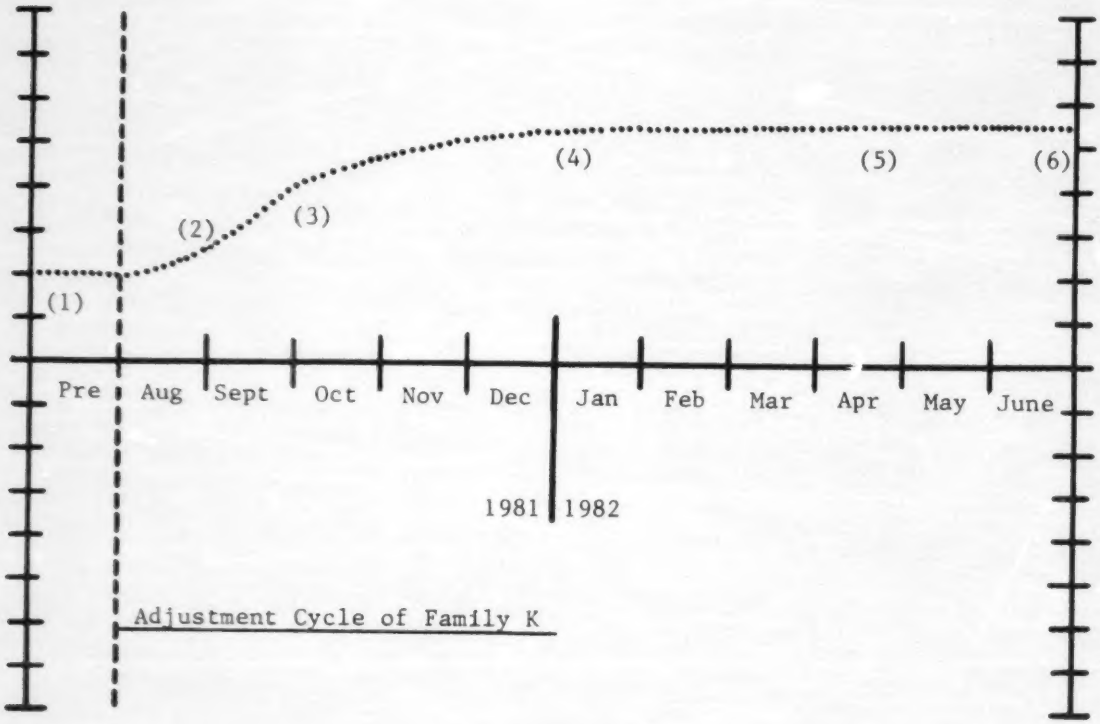
Family K

Family K lives four miles outside a small town of about 3000 in a rural area of southern New York State. Their four-bedroom home is situated on a large lot at the foot of a small mountain ridge. The father, 43, is a librarian at the college in town, and the mother, 42, teaches kindergarten in a neighboring town. They have two children, a son who is 17 and a daughter of 15. Both children are good students, are active in school activities, and write to pen-pals around the world. Outdoor recreation such as hiking, cross-country skiing, and bicycling are very important to everyone in this family, and they generally do these things together. Indeed, it was this strong interest in outdoor activities that led Family K to

select a rural area for their home. The family is Jewish and occasionally attends synagogue. The parents met while on an international exchange program, and have long been familiar with the idea of student exchanges. In 1980, they had a wonderful experience when one of the son's pen-pals came to stay with them for a month; this and their encounters with AFS students in the community led them to consider hosting. The mother in particular liked the idea of hosting a student, and saw their participation in the AFS program as a way to counter bigotry and prejudice in the world. The family expressed an interest in hosting a student from the Near or Far East, or from Eastern Europe, in order to gain an opportunity to learn about a culture very different from their own.

The student placed with Family K was a male from Sri Lanka, age 17, who was interested in sports and scouting. He was a Buddhist, but had studied in a Christian school. He was described as being considerate and responsible as well as serious about his studies. His father, who had been the village headman, died suddenly less than a year before the student applied to AFS. Since then, the student had become active in village associations, and had taken on some of the responsibility that formerly had been held by his father. He had traveled to India previous to his AFS experience. This placement looked good, particularly since the student showed promise of being able to join in with Family K's vigorous outdoor recreational activities.

The pattern of adjustment followed by Family K during the course of the year is illustrated on the chart at the bottom of this page. The numbers in parentheses are references to the explanatory comments that begin at the top of the following page.



(1) Family K approached the hosting experience with positive expectations. Letters they had received from the student prior to his arrival gave them every reason to believe that he was well suited to their family. They were concerned, however, about the state of the student's health since he was from a Third World country, and were worried that he might not receive adequate orientation to the U.S., especially regarding personal hygiene and modern appliances. They also were concerned about the extent of their personal responsibility for the student, and worried that they might be held liable in the event of a serious accident.

(2) The initial adjustment period went well. The family enjoyed having the student, and the student seemed to enjoy the family's outdoor activities. He was helpful around the house and considerate of others. An initial problem with the student's strong cologne, which the family found nauseating, disappeared gradually over a few week's time. Another problem in this early stage concerned the student's reluctance to part with his dirty laundry; this, too, was resolved in a timely fashion by the host parents, who took the initiative and explained to the student what was expected of him.

(3) The student was quiet, but eager to become part of the family. He participated with the family in the religious services of the High Holy Days, and chose to fast with the family even though they were quite prepared to give him food. The host brother and sister were happy to introduce the AFSer to the students and the activities of their school, and to take him with them to parties and other gatherings; this was especially appreciated by the student, who found it difficult to break into the social groups at the school because of his lack of English proficiency as well as the great cultural differences between Sri Lanka and the United States.

(4) By mid-year, the relationship between the student and the family had stabilized; they knew what to expect from each other. When Family K first applied to host, they selected the six-month option in order to give the student an opportunity to experience another type of family or to live closer to the town. Although they had decided to host the student for a full year before he arrived, they decided in January to ask the Sri Lankan how he felt about staying. He indicated that he wanted to remain with Family K. It was at this point that the family realized just how much a part of their family the AFSer had become, and that they themselves did not want him to leave. The student continued to be very quiet, but the family accepted this as an expression of either his personality or his culture. They enjoyed introducing the student to their way of life, and delighted in his reactions to his many new experiences.

(5) The experience continued to be much the same for the remainder of the year. By early spring, the host brother had applied and been selected to go to India for a year on another exchange program. The AFSer was invited to speak on numerous occasions, and this created some conflicts in the family schedule. Following one serious scheduling conflict, however, the student started asking the family before making commitments to speak, and this problem, like the others, disappeared.

(6) At the end of the experience, the family felt very positive about the student and about the experience of hosting. However, they commented that, in their opinion, the student had arrived at the beginning of the year with too little information about Sri Lanka and about the United States. They were disappointed that the student had been unable or unwilling to tell them very much about his native country.

A major dynamic that seems to have operated in the case of Family K was the ability of both the student and the family to be sensitive to and accepting of each other.

Family L

Family L lives in western Pennsylvania in a hilly rural area lying between the two westernmost ridges of the Allegheny Mountains, a little more than an hour's drive from Pittsburgh. They live atop an isolated hill; the three nearest communities each have fewer than 1000 inhabitants. The family lives in a one-year-old home built by the father, 41, an industrial engineer employed in a management position by a nearby mining company. The mother, also 41, is a full-time homemaker who works on finishing the house, engages in creative arts and crafts projects, volunteers her time to youth organizations such as the Cub Scouts, and manages the family's small but rapidly growing commercial berry farm. There are four children. The oldest son, 18, is a high school senior who studies a great deal and who is active in golf and drama, and (with his father) in Boy Scouting. The oldest daughter, 17, is a junior at the same high school who studies less (but makes excellent marks) and plays the flute in the school band; she also is a voracious reader. Both teenagers also work part-time at a local restaurant. The youngest son, 11, is active in Boy Scouting. The youngest daughter is 9. For five months prior to beginning their AFS hosting experience, the mother and father served as foster parents for a boy of 17 who had run afoul of the law. The family also hosts for three weeks each summer a young Black boy from New York City in cooperation with the Fresh-Air Fund. Family L is dominated by the father, an outgoing and energetic person who expects his children to contribute to the work and economic well-being of the family, and to assist in maintaining their home in a presentable condition at all times. Following an interest in AFS shown by the oldest daughter, the family was exposed to AFS students and reacted positively to the idea of hosting. The completion of their new, larger house and the senior year of their oldest child coincided neatly, making 1981-82 an ideal year for them to invite an AFSer into their home.

The student placed with Family L was a male from Ireland, age 17, who had graduated from secondary school just before coming to the U.S. with AFS. He had already determined to follow the footsteps of his father, a highly successful businessman with whom he had an excellent relationship, into the field of chartered accountancy. To the AFS people who interviewed him in Ireland, the student seemed less than enthusiastic about spending a year as an AFSer because of his preoccupation with doing well on certain exams that would admit him to an accountancy course. But he was too young to begin the course at once, so his family had urged him to participate in AFS as a "maturing influence."* The student had brothers aged 15 and 8, and a sister of 13, and he was said to get along with them quite well; he also had a girlfriend whom his parents acknowledged as treating "as one of the family." The student's active interests in Ireland included several sports as

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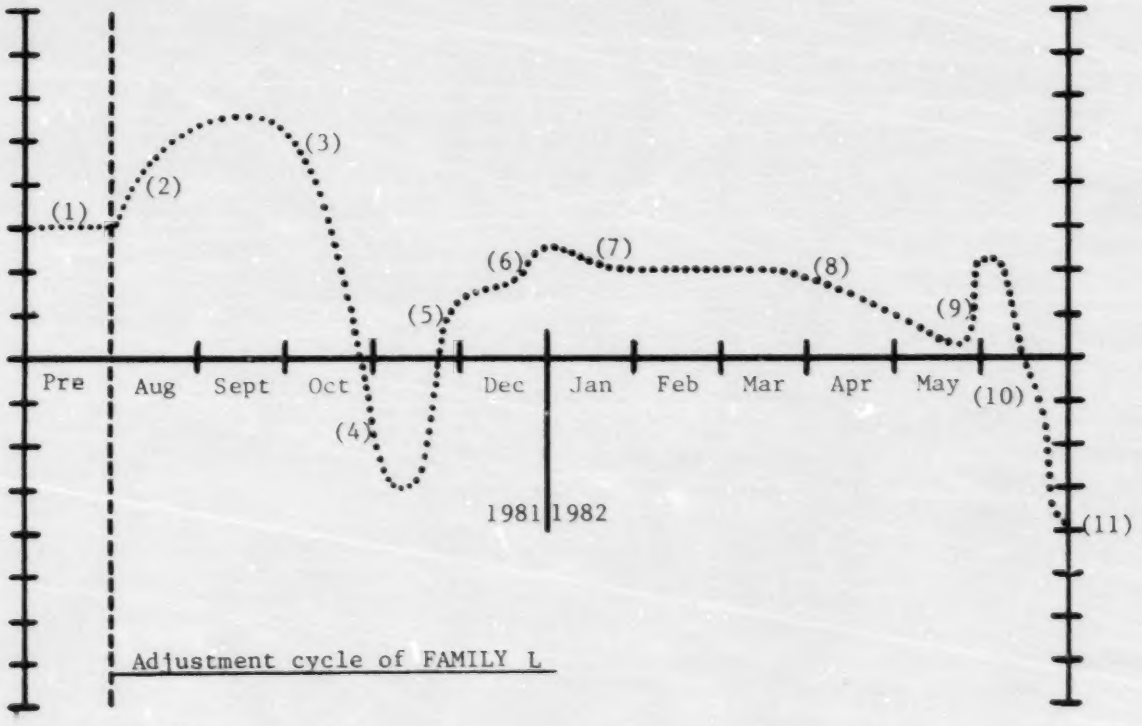
* The researcher (Grove) understands this statement in context to mean "broadening experience." He does not understand it to imply that the parents felt that the student was immature.

well as Boy Scouting. A faculty member from his school wrote that "His attitude to authority is positive and he has good self-discipline." His parents wrote, "We feel, on the whole, that he appreciates rather than resents the rules we lay down. He is expected to do his share of odd jobs around the house, i.e., gardening, bringing in fuel . . . . At times his bedroom can have a rather untidy appearance!" The most striking fact about this student from the researcher's point of view was that he was highly articulate. On paper, then, this placement looked quite satisfactory.

The pattern of adjustment followed by Family L is illustrated by the chart at the bottom of this page. The numbers in parentheses are references to the comments that follow.

(1) Family L approached the hosting experience with generally positive expectations, and with a realistic understanding of what it meant to host a teenager in their home (due to a recent period of five months as foster parents). However, they were concerned about whether a student from a wealthy family could adjust to their comparatively modest lifestyle, and about the Irish student's reported lack of enthusiasm for the idea of spending a year abroad with AFS.

(2) The experience got off to a good start for everyone. The family soon came to believe that their economic level and that of the student's natural family were actually not significantly different. The student and the host siblings got along well. This honeymoon period was capped some six weeks into the homestay by a 24-hour visit of the student's natural parents, which went extremely well.



(3) By the time two months had passed, however, a number of problems involving the attitude and behavior of the student were making the hosting experience less and less pleasant for the family, especially the father and the oldest host brother. (a) The AFSer was not in the least disposed to keep his bedroom neat, even when reminded. (b) The AFSer showed little willingness to be of assistance around the house to the extent routinely expected of the host siblings. (c) The AFSer took a dim view of the midnight curfew laid down by the parents, even though this was in accordance with the state law ruling drivers under 18 years of age off the highways by that time. (d) The AFSer made extensive use of the telephone in order to talk for extended periods of time with the rapidly growing number of friends he was making locally. (e) The AFSer was not punctual to the extent customary in this family; in addition, he habitually arose late in the morning (upsetting the children's pattern of breakfasting and departing for school) and on numerous occasions was extremely rude to anyone unlucky enough to have been delegated to remind him to arise. (f) The AFSer went out for golf at the high school and often did better than the host brother, who also was a member of the golf team; in addition, the host brother increasingly resented the many special privileges that seemed to come to the student because of the ease with which he formed relationships with faculty members and because of the mere fact that he was an AFSer. Also not lost on the host brother was the great popularity of the AFSer with his female classmates.

(4) Around the first of November, there was a heated exchange between the student and the host father focused on the issue of whether the student's girlfriend in Ireland would be allowed to visit for three weeks in December and January. (The issues were too complex to be discussed in this Preliminary Report.) Other issues that were increasingly undermining the relationship between the student and the host father were (a) the condition of the student's room, (b) the resistance of the student to helping with chores, and (c) the student's unhappiness with the midnight curfew. (At this same time, the host brother was becoming more and more dissatisfied with the AFSer's manner and personal style, which he found egotistical, opinionated, and condescending, and with a characteristic facial expression of the AFSer, which the host brother termed "the smirk.") The AFS Area Representative came to the home and provided counseling to the family and student, after which the host father agreed to compromise by reducing his expectations with respect to both the neatness of the student's room and his assistance with chores around the house. But he made no change in his demands regarding the curfew.

(5) Family L hosted a large family get-together at Thanksgiving, with very happy results. At about this time another compromise was reached regarding the visit of the AFSer's girlfriend. With the tension between the student and the host father now greatly diminished, the homestay entered a period in which it was viewed, on balance, as positive by all family members except the host brother. Nevertheless, the host brother successfully kept his negative feelings under control, maintained appearances, and occasionally shared enjoyable experiences with the student.*

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* However, the host brother (and, to a lesser extent, the host sister) was very vocal and articulate in complaining about the AFSer when talking to the researcher. The researcher's willingness to listen in a patient, non-judgemental manner may have provided a safety valve for the host brother. For an account of a similar case, see *Occasional Papers in Intercultural Learning*, No. 2 (November 1982), pp. 12-13. (The *Papers* are available without charge from the AFS Research Department.)

(6) The Irish girlfriend of the AFSer visited for ten days spanning Christmas and New Years. Negative expectations on the part of family members about this girl proved unfounded, and her visit passed quite smoothly. However, the family noticed that during these ten days -- and *only* during these ten days -- the AFSer arose each morning a model of promptness and cheerfulness.

(7) The remainder of the winter passed almost without incident. The father had received a promotion at work and was away from home more than ususal, and the student also was out of the home very frequently, participating in a seemingly endless round of social and sporting events. Their paths crossed infrequently.

(8) When spring arrived in late March, there were an increasing number of jobs to be done around the house, one of the main ones being to work on the family's small berry farm. The host father began to expect more assistance from his own teenagers, and correspondingly asked more of the AFSer (though comparatively less than what he was asking of his own children). The AFSer strongly resisted these requests for assistance, and usually performed work only when actually threatened with some sort of punishment (such as being "grounded") for non-performance. In spite of the growing animosity between them, the student and the host father had "heart-to-heart talks" on a few occasions. But these never resulted in the student's making any changes in his attitude or behavior. The father ultimately blamed himself for "failing to get the student to respond to me as a parent," but he also arrived at the conclusion that the student was "selfish."

(9) At the end of May, the family went on vacation to Minnesota, and the AFSer accompanied them. Notwithstanding the problems of the spring, this experience yielded what might be called a brief "era of good feelings."

(10) During the last few weeks, the quality of the hosting experience deteriorated sharply as the student continued to resist all attempts to get him to become a fully participating member of Family L. At one point, the student said to the host brother (referring to the father), "He doesn't give a shit about me, so I'm not going to give a shit about him." When the father learned of this, he was deeply hurt. He pointed out that, among other things, he had loaned money to the student on numerous occasions and had not been insistent when repayments were slow in coming. With one week remaining in the homestay, the father became utterly fed up and seriously considered ordering the student out of the house; however, he was dissuaded by the host mother.

(11) On the day of the student's departure, tears were shed all around. While insisting that it had been "a good experience on the whole," the father concluded that his principal mistake had been to compromise with the student in mid-November because, as it turned out, the student had given little or nothing in return for his concessions. The mother was deeply offended by her discovery that the student had not taken back to Ireland a picture that she had painted especially for him and presented at Christmas. Only the host brother seemed to miss the student, apparently because his presence had caused the year to be more exciting than it would have been in his absence.*

A major dynamic that seems to have operated in the case of Family L was the unwillingness of the AFS student to enter wholeheartedly into the day-to-day patterns of life and work characteristic of the host family.

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* This is not to say that the host brother had suddenly become blind to what he regarded as the shortcomings of the AFSer.

Family M

Family M lives in a community of about 7000 inhabitants outside of a small city in New York State. Their home is in a small housing development on a wooded lot, but within walking distance of the high school. Both parents are 35 years old. The father is a manufacturing engineer for a large corporation. The mother does community volunteer work, and also holds a part-time job in a government office. There are two children. The son, 15, is a good student who is involved in school activities, especially soccer. The 13-year-old daughter is also a good student, and is active in music, soccer, and Girl Scouts. She frequently brings friends home for meals or to spend the night, and often visits these friends in their homes. Family M attends church regularly and enjoys family biking, but each member of the family has interests that he or she pursues individually. The AFS Chapter in the community asked Family M to consider hosting because the mother had shown some interest in exchange students through her involvement in PTA activities. (Also, the family had intercultural experience, having lived in Germany for two years.) The family accepted the idea of hosting and looked forward to it as both a learning experience and as fun. Although the son did not want to host, the daughter was enthusiastic about the idea and hoped that her brother would warm up to it. The family offered to host either a boy or a girl, but seemed to feel that there would be some advantages to having a boy since the son would be closest in age to the student and the sleeping arrangements would work out better. Even the daughter, who otherwise might have preferred a girl, hoped that having a boy student would help her brother be more interested in the hosting experience.

The student placed with Family M was a male, probably 18 years old,* from a small Kikuyu village in central Kenya. This student never had been outside of Kenya before his AFS year; he traveled to Nairobi for the first time for his AFS orientation. He always had done very well in school, and had studied English for nine years. (English was the language of instruction in his Kenyan high school.) This student was interested in sports, especially soccer, volley ball, and track. He was seen by those who interviewed him in Kenya as a person who could easily adapt to new situations, and as kind and concerned for people of all ages. He regularly volunteered to visit the sick in the local hospital, helped to raise money for the disabled, and generally was well respected in his community. From a technical standpoint, this placement looked good, for the student's interests matched those of the host family.

The pattern of adjustment followed by Family M is illustrated on the chart at the bottom of the following page. In this particular family, the son's feelings about the hosting experience follow a totally different path from those of the rest of the family. Therefore, two separate lines are drawn. The line with the dots closer together traces the pattern for the family excluding the son, and the line with the dots farther apart shows the pattern for the son alone. The numbers in parentheses along the family's line are references to the comments that follow; note,

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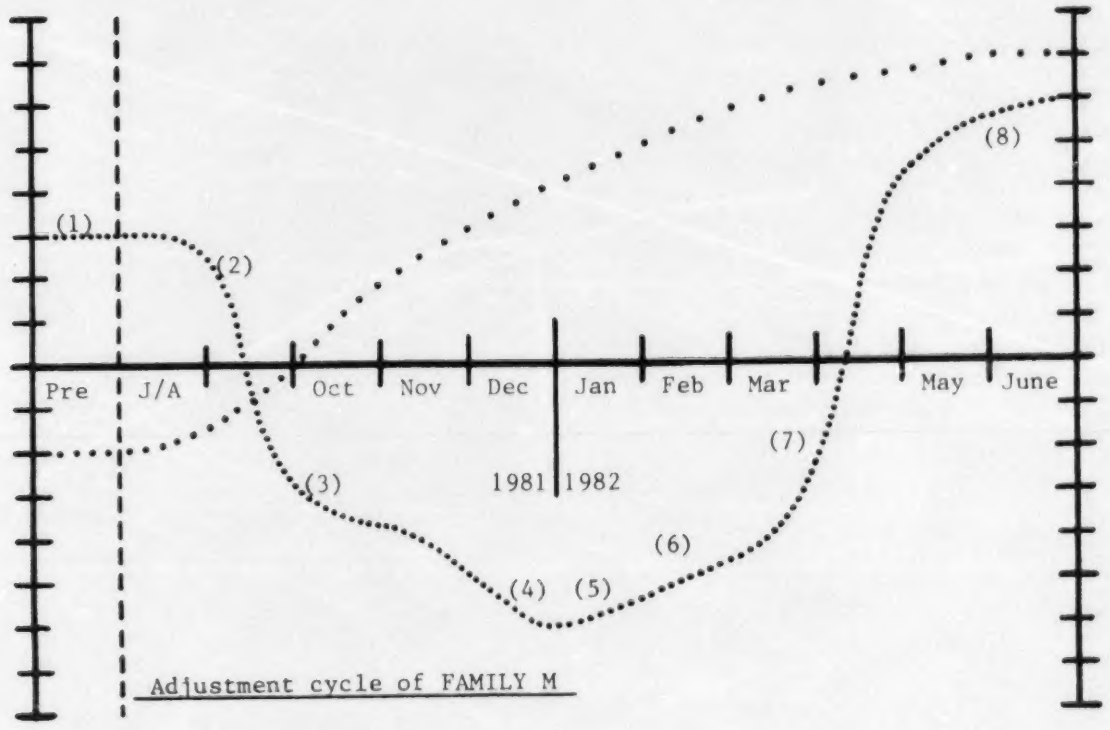
* The student was not certain of his exact age.

however, that each set of comments will occur in two paragraphs, the first of which will describe the family's reactions to the homestay, and the second of which will describe the son's reactions during the corresponding period of time.

(1) Family M approached the experience of hosting with moderately positive expectations, and they looked forward to a good year. However, they had thought about some of the problems that they might encounter because of the great differences in culture and climate, and they were somewhat concerned that the student might face racial prejudice in the community. The daughter had some misgivings about hosting a student from Kenya, but she tended to keep these feelings to herself.

The son approached the experience of hosting with negative expectations. He continued to oppose the idea of hosting throughout the period of preparation.

(2) Problems began early in the experience. The Kenyan student announced, shortly after his arrival, that he intended to work and earn money so that he could enter college in the U.S. He said that his Kenyan headmaster had instructed him to do this. The student quit playing soccer at school in order to take on a nearly full-time job after school and on weekends. Family M was disappointed that the student's goals were so different from what is expected of an AFS student, and felt angry with AFS for not making these expectations clear to the stu-



Adjustment cycle of FAMILY M

dent before he left Kenya. The AFSer also was having trouble in school due to his unfamiliarity with the academic work. The AFSer and the host family met with local AFS counselors to discuss these problems. In general, the family was finding the experience of hosting to be much harder than they had anticipated. They complained that the Kenyan student was not demonstrative, and they they did not know whether or not he was happy.

The issue of the student's working did not particularly concern the host brother. At this stage of the experience, the son was not interested in the student or his problems; in fact, he disliked him and would deliberately leave the house in order to avoid being around him. The son also felt uncomfortable about having the student in his bedroom.

(3) The student cut back the hours he worked and lightened his course load at school, but Family M still did not find him to be a warm person. The student was accustomed to living and eating alone in his own house (located on his parents' land) in Kenya, and this seemed to make it especially difficult for him to adapt to the role of a teenager living in a comparatively close-knit American family, and to make the type of positive emotional contribution to the family that Family M expected of their children. Tensions were developing between the student and the host sister, and in mid-October they had an explosive argument. On the positive side, Family M found little problem in getting the student to do household chores; he did whatever was requested, and even pitched in voluntarily.

The son and the AFSer were beginning to get along better by this time. The student apparently had shared some details of his life in Kenya and about his girlfriends with the host brother, who enjoyed these discussions. The fact that they were both boys and that they shared a room seemed now to help their relationship become friendly. Later, in early November when the weather began to turn cold, the host brother and the Kenyan worked together cutting wood for the family's wood stove; this shared activity brought them steadily closer together.

(4) The relationship between the student and the host sister continued to deteriorate. The student presented problems for the sister when she had friends visit because he expected to converse with these girls, telling them about himself and Kenya, and did not know when to leave them alone to their own activities. He was offended easily when the host sister criticized him about something. For her part, the daughter was annoyed with the student for not listening to and acting upon her advice, and with her parents for not requiring the student to conform to the family's expectations. She felt that the student received special treatment from her parents. The student was depressed at this time and the family had trouble relating to him. The student seemed alienated from the family and often left the room when another member of the family walked into it. At this time the family actively considered the possibility of having the student moved to a different host family, since the adjustment process was seeming too difficult for them to continue.

The son, on the other hand, was getting along quite well with the student and did not want him to leave. He was beginning to view the student and a friend whom he could trust.

(5) The AFS District Representative worked intensively with the family and the student in order to understand the problems that had occurred. The student spent

a few days after Christmas with a fellow Kenyan AFSer in another state, and this provided a short break for the rep to discuss the situation with the family. The rep also spoke with the student after his return, and again with each member of the family. Both sides were encouraged to try again as a result of this counseling because both sides now had a better understanding of each other.

The son remained on good terms with the student throughout this counseling experience.

(6) The relationship between the family and the student gradually improved during the winter. The family began to see more good qualities in the student. He was trustworthy and clean, and he listened to them. The student ceased to leave the room when someone else walked in. He started to say "thank you." On the other hand, he still did not contribute much to family discussions. Furthermore, the experience still presented some problems for the parents, who were having to drive the student back and forth to his job. They still felt angry at AFS for not explaining the rules to the student before he left Kenya; but they also saw these rules (about working) as ill-suited for a student whose family didn't have any money to send him to supplement his AFS allowance. The host sister and the student generally avoided each other in order to stay out of conflict.

The son's relationship with the student continued to improve. He felt that the AFSer was like a brother. Because they were boys in the same school, they found more and more mutual interests to discuss.

(7) Near the end of March, the student went on a senior class trip to Washington, D.C., along with 40 or 50 peers. This trip became a turning point in the experience. Because he shared a room with three other boys and generally became well acquainted with several of his classmates during this trip, the student became part of a large circle of friends. He was obviously happier, and the family felt less need to entertain him. The Washington trip provided a needed break for both the student and the host sister, who were able to improve their relationship upon the student's return to the point of joking around with each other. The AFSer seemed to be more comfortable at home and more like a member of the family. The father began to feel quite positive about the hosting experience at this time. The mother still felt burdened by the experience, but stated that she had come to accept that it would not all be perfect; she described her feelings toward the student in this way: "Maybe it's not love, but I think it's liking."

The host brother and the student gradually deepened their friendship throughout this period.

(8) The relationship between the student and the family improved markedly. In the good weather the student was able to bike to work, thus relieving the parents of this burden. The student remained happy because of the good times he was having with his new group of friends. He was even altering his work schedule so that he could spend more time with them. His improved mood helped the parents feel happier, too. The family was especially pleased because the student finally had gained what they had hoped he would gain from the AFS experience: he had become part of an American family. They felt good about the role they had played in helping the student learn about American culture and family life, and they derived a great deal of satisfaction from the positive impact they had had *as host parents* on this student. Family M was glad that they had been encouraged to try again with the student, and they gave much credit to the District Representative who had work-

ed with them. The host sister ended up liking the student, and felt that her parents no longer gave him special treatment. She stated, however, that she would not want to be an AFS student, and would not want to host again, because she had found the experience too difficult.

The host brother was impressed by the number of friends that the AFSer had made by the end of the experience. Saying good-bye was an emotional experience for the son, and he began planning at once to find a job so that he could save enough money to visit the AFSer in Kenya.

In the case of Family M, the researcher (Hansel) feels it is impossible to state only one major dynamic. At least four major dynamics seem to have operated in the case of this host family: (1) The Kenyan student came to the U.S. with goals that were not in line with the nature of the AFS experience nor with the host family's expectations. (2) The AFSer and the host sister developed a serious personality clash. (3) The student and the family were faced with a number of extreme cultural differences. (4) On the positive side, intervention by local AFS counselors seems to have been a decisive factor in changing the course of this family's hosting experience.

The 1982-83 Phase of this Research

During the 1982-83 hosting year, the Research Department of AFS International is documenting the experiences of three additional host families, all of whom are located in and around St. Louis, Missouri. This phase of the research is being carried out by Mrs. Nancy Painter. The three families and their respective AFS students have the following characteristics:

- Family N consists of a father who is a data processing project manager, a mother who is a free-lance writer, and three children aged 8 to 11. Their AFS student is a boy from New Zealand.

- Family P consists of a mother who works as a cook in a restaurant, a father who recently retired, and nine children, three of whom (aged 16, 18, and 21) are still at home. They are hosting a boy from Greece.

- Family Q consists of a father who is a minister in an all-Black Lutheran church, a mother who is a lay associate working with Lutheran churches in the area, and two children, one of whom, a boy of 17, is still at home. Their AFS student is a boy from Ghana.